

WASHINGTON DIARY

How to construct a crisis through summer 'chutzpah'

Watergate. Debategate. Teachergate. To live in Washington is to be caught in a swirl of improbable political passions. That education has become the hot talk of the summer is improbable but true.

President Reagan is briefed, on Air Force One, about the latest developments in curriculum reform. Walter Mondale and John Glenn would have you believe they think of little else. The social standing of Education Secretary Terrell Bell has shot up 60 points. No longer presiding meekly over the abolition of his own department, the affable Bell dashes from meeting to meeting explaining to America how earnest the country is about educational reform.

The reason for all this hoopla is the "excellence report", a document now so famous and apparently so significant that it would be churlish to give it its full title.

Sufficient to say that it is a report full of the usual good sense (back to basics: more homework, cleverer teachers) which made history last April by adopting two maxims. Maxim one: write a report so short that even the President of the United States could be persuaded to read it. Maxim two: lard the report with alarming references to the Soviet and Japanese threats and the recruiting problems of the armed forces.

And the result? You would be hard put to find a single newspaper-reading American who was not dimly aware this summer of two facts: that education's "excellence" is in jeopardy, and that the Reagan Administration is doing about it, and you are unlikely to receive a cogent answer.

So far, so good. Putting education on the political map for a change cannot be a bad news. But there is a problem. Ask the man in the Seattle Datsun why there is a crisis in education, or just what the Reagan Administration is doing about it, and you are unlikely to receive a cogent answer.

It is hard to escape the cynical conclusion that Teachergate, like so much else in American politics, consists of much less than meets the eye.

How true, for example, is the main premise of the "excellence report" that American education is so bad that the nation is "at risk"? Not very. A nation that carries off more Nobel prizes than any other must be doing something right. It is true that there are some atrocious schools, a high level of functional illiteracy and poor teachers.

But there are also many excellent schools with highly-motivated teachers. And a high level of functional illiteracy is hardly surprising in a nation that has seen polyglot immigration.

In some ways, America has incomparable educational assets, chief among which is the importance that ordinary people still attach to it and the fact that, despite the recession, a rich and varied menu of opportunities

Peter David argues that 'Teachergate' - the issue of excellence in peril - is likely to prove a nine-day political wonder

is available to anyone who wants to use them. It is not as if there are no kinds of evidence for this hunger for education. If you are impressed by statistics, consider the fact that in a recent survey one in ten parents said they would take their children out of free public education and put them in a fee-paying private school if the Government gave them an annual tax credit of \$250 (about £160).

A vote of "no confidence" in public education? Perhaps. But also an indication of the weight American parents attach to the power of education to give their children a head start.

Sometimes this belief in education becomes an obsession. The competition for places at pre-school play groups is as intense as the competition for Oxbridge entrance in Britain. For example, my son Ian, too young for a place at the only local public nursery school, had to compete with the cream of Capitol Hill motherhood to get into the oversubscribed parent-run cooperative near our house. And in Washington it is never just a question of first-come first-served. Ian had to be taken by an anxious mother for a morning's "assessment". He was accepted only after a "magnificent performance" in the sandpit.

That's all very well, you will say, for the pampered middle classes. What about the poor, the blacks or the burgeoning population of Hispanics? It would be ridiculous to deny the huge class and racial inequalities in American education. White flight - to private schools or to state schools in the expensive suburbs - has created a rump of terrible inner-city schools where matriculation is a feat in itself. But the schools cannot be blamed for problems that pervade the society around them. Often, in fact, the schools are small but significant engines of reform. Washington, a city so segregated racially that it reminds me of my native Johannesburg, contains only two institutions in which blacks and whites mingle relatively freely: and the schools. And, through busing, it is the schools which have forced white children in the south and in Chicago and Boston to recognize that they are growing up in a multi-racial nation.

What is sad about Teachergate is that it has convinced the public that public education is on the brink of collapse and that self-respecting parents should flee into the private sector.

Reagan's most important educational proposal - tax incentives for those who do - will accentuate the differences between the educational

"haves" and "have nots." So will the Administration's opposition to busing and its incredible claim that it is Federal aid to education (which is directed mainly to the poor and the declining educational standards for one that followed the launching of the Sputnik in 1957).

While Education Secretary Bell tours the country congratulating the Administration on its enthusiasm for education, his department quietly continues to shed staff responsible for desegregation, equal opportunities and vocational education.

The success of the Reagan Administration in identifying itself with the cause of educational reform is, in the circumstances, a masterpiece of political chutzpah. Publication of the "excellence report" and its dire prognostications alerted the President's advisers to widespread public anxieties about the education of their children. A series of vapid, but widely-televized, presidential speeches on education has convinced Americans that the President has the matter in hand.

The net result? A political advantage for a President whose past record has been conspicuous for a dedication to cuts and pedagogic priorities like

restoring prayer (outlawed by the Supreme Court in 1963) to the public schools.

According to one senator, who has been embroiled in the debate on education, a majority of the authors of the "excellence report" have begun to complain that the Administration's response, while valiant, has ignored most of the report's recommendations.

They should not have been surprised. Many of the policies advocated in the report - such as, a return to basics and stiffer entrance tests for teachers - were already under way when the report hit the headlines.

Others, like the notion that teachers should be paid a lot more than their less-talented colleagues, have been embraced by the Administration because there is nothing the Administration can do to influence teacher pay, which is negotiated locally in thousands of school districts across the country.

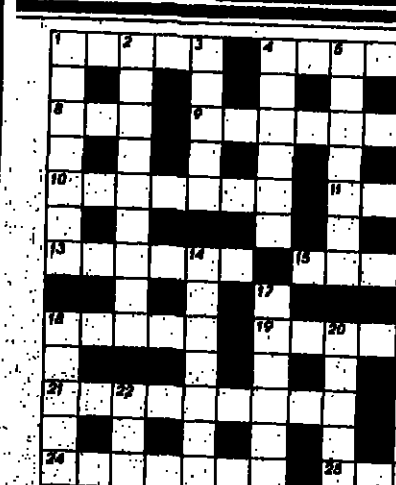
It is possible, but only just, that Teachergate and the "excellence report" will have an enduring impact on education - provoking, perhaps, another surge of investment like one that followed the launching of the Sputnik in 1957.

There is little cause for optimism, however. The Russians, after all, did not win the Space, or any other race these days. And in their headlong rush to maintain scientific and technological leadership.

So, in the end, the "excellence report" may turn out to have been another nine-day wonder of a summer. Worse, its only effect may have been to demoralize the already demoralized teachers it was intended to help. If there is a lesson, it is summed up best by something Senator Moynihan said many years ago: Washington is a terrible gift for oversimplifying issues. It needs people who can "complicate" them.

Education is the complex issue of the day. By succeeding too well in reducing it to simple phrases that even a President could understand, the "excellence report" may have done education a disservice.

No 113 CROSSWORD by Rufus



- Across**
- Outmoded: vehicles coming back in fashion (5)
 - Master copy of a client's order (7)
 - Quieter and don't go on (5)
 - Let the pay settlement provide thoughtful action (9)
 - Out of work one may take it (7)
 - Supporters of the school board (5)
 - They weren't worn long during the slides (5)
 - Have ambitions for a high place in the church? (6)
 - Means adjusted to accommodate the master (5)
 - Material for firing (7)
 - Sure set with meat for livers, perhaps (6)
 - Put Sue into employment (3)
 - Set down in the act but not immediately implemented (7)
 - A lad's: out-bowled, perhaps (5)

- Down**
- Joint holders (7)
 - Drug problem that's the talk of present era? (9)
 - Conch or train (5)
 - Raise a hand to a superior? (6)
 - State trials (7)
 - Number sent up to bed (3)
 - Dependable form of alloy (5)
 - It's not material for a religious song (9)
 - Pray the change will be for good (7)
 - Cracked intellectual? (3-4)
 - Doesn't need to change to get to a Belgian port (6)
 - Acted dumb (5)
 - Play groups (7)
 - One point to the Italian, nothing to us (3)

Solution to puzzle on p. 112

THE TIMES Educational Supplement

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Political ban by Sir Keith angers science staff body

by Nick Wood

Fears about the growing popularity of the peace movement probably triggered Sir Keith Joseph's controversial decision to outlaw questions of a social or economic nature from school physics exams, the Association for Science Education, the biggest professional body for science teachers, says in a new background paper on the proposed 16-plus exam which has been sent to all its regional secretaries.

The paper devotes a complete section to the Education Secretary's response to the draft criteria on physics, which was contained in a letter sent in March to the joint secretaries of the joint council for 16-plus national criteria.

It reminds teachers that Sir Keith wants all reference to the political aspects of physics omitted from the criteria because its inclusion "might encourage boards to set examination questions which could be answered with little or no knowledge of physics... and might make it difficult to avoid tendentiousness in the teaching of science subjects."

The ASE, which has already rejected Sir Keith's views, discusses them further under the heading, "Socio-economic considerations - a political football."

It says: "It is questionable whether this statement would have been made if the peace movement were not getting so much publicity and sympathy in the country at the moment. The statement appears to be entirely political."

The paper also quotes extensively from confidential joint council minutes, disclosing for the first time the council's anger at Sir Keith's pronouncement on physics and its growing sense of despair over his failure to decide on the future of the proposed exam which would replace O levels and CSEs.

In public, at least, the council was non-committal over Sir Keith's intervention, but in private there was no mistaking the mood of its members.

The Secretary of State's observations on physics amount to an intervention in the school curriculum which is *ultra vires*: contrary to the traditions of the British educational system and totally unacceptable to schools... as well as to the examining boards, the minutes of the meeting



Brent will veto 'racially unaware'

Teachers applying for jobs in the London borough of Brent will be asked at interviews if they are prepared to attend racism awareness courses starting next term.

Those who refuse will not be given jobs in the Labour-controlled borough which, with three in five of its population drawn from ethnic minority groups, has the highest proportion of black people in the country.

The statement comes from Mrs Ambrose Neil, the black vice chairman of the education committee, which has recently moved to the left with the resignation of Mr Bryan Stark as chairman and his replacement by Mr. Ron Anderson, a 36-year-old teacher who works in Haringey. Mr Stark stepped down in protest at the council's policy of refusing to close schools despite dwindling numbers of pupils.

Mrs Neil said: "This is the type of question someone like me asks at interview. It helps teachers to understand where we are in the borough - moving in the direction of creating a multicultural society."

"Many teachers say they welcome the idea and explain that they've applied for a job in Brent. I've not had anyone saying 'No'."

"But if they did say 'No, I don't find it necessary and I don't think I would like to attend such a course', my next question would be 'Why? Can you give some reason why you should not attend?'"

But applicants who flatly refused to go on racism awareness courses would be rejected, Mrs Neil said.

"I would not be prepared to appoint them. The council has a responsibility to educate for a multicultural society and that person (who refuses) is saying they don't see the need to interact with other races properly."

Mrs Neil said that the question would be put to black applicants as well. Those who said they did not see the need to attend the courses because they were not racists would be asked how they would cope with, say, Asian, Greek and indeed Anglo-Saxon children, all of whom were to be found in Brent.

Mrs Neil added that she hoped teachers would take up the opportunities to go on the new courses, but if persuasion failed, the council would consider reviving earlier plans to make the courses compulsory.

Faraway places with strange sounding names ...

by Phillip Venning

Many school leavers are unable to use a map, and have little idea about where places are in Britain or abroad, says the Association of Teachers of Tourism.

In a statement the association says that many leavers know complicated geographical theories but have little practical knowledge of their own country or the wider world.

"Information on national capitals, frontiers, ports, rivers and mountain ranges is often woefully lacking. What is more serious, they have a hazy notion of distances and the relative size and location of countries," it adds.

The association has about 90 members who work mainly in further education, training young people to work in the travel trade.

Mr David Airey, a Surrey University lecturer and association president, said that it was rare to find a student who could name all the countries in the Common Market. Most had difficulty using maps and he had heard of students who thought the Trossachs were in Russia, Mandarins near China, and the Alhambra Palace in Bradford.

One reason for the problem, the association says, is that teachers feel that "apes and bays geography" - that is, an awareness of the location of places - is old-fashioned and not academically respectable.

It adds: "In many schools geography has been relegated in favour of environmental studies which stress the home region rather than the wider world outside the British Isles. Even so, it is debatable whether such students have an adequate knowledge of the geography of their own country."

The association is also critical of the fact that where particular countries are studied, the importance of tourism - a major source of income and employment in many places - is usually ignored.

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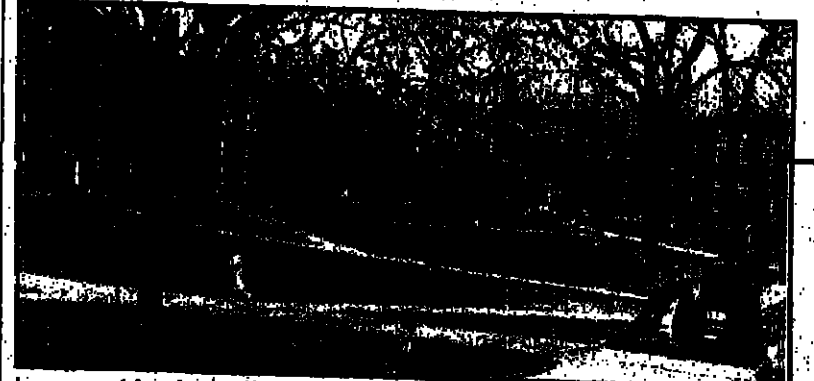
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Incomparable educational assets: Two faces of Harvard University. Above, the Harvard Yale (halls of residence) and right, Harkness Common (graduate students' centre).

'A rich, varied menu of opportunities is available to anybody'

Below: The Joseph F. Smith Library on the Brigham Young University-Hawaii campus.



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Better to travel hopefully...

How much general knowledge should the average beneficiary of 11 years of English primary and secondary education be expected to acquire? Some such essentially unanswerable question is raised, at a guess, several times a week, by the odd news item which records the numerous *lacunae* in the great British public's stock of information.

Diligent interviewers seek to elicit from innocent young people the name of the Prime Minister, or the Secretary of State for Education or the Editor of *The Times* and discover that an embarrassingly large number say "pass".

Where once it was thought to be part of the British heritage to be able to reel off the kings and queens of England or the substance of *1066 and All That*, now the idea of continuity is carefully concealed beneath a welter of forgotten facts of social history.

And yet, it seems general knowledge - that great standby of wet afternoons - is alive and well and flourishing on radio and television, from the breezy world of *Top of the Form* to Bamber Gascoigne's ageing youth and *University Challenge* and the portentous *Mastermind* with its inquisitorial chair and relentless pursuit of obscure trivia which, once begun, must invariably be allowed to finish.

The latest *cri de coeur* comes from a body called The Tourism Society, or rather from the section of that society formed by the Association of Teachers of Tourism, whose members are mainly engaged in teaching courses in travel and tourism in further education (page 1). School-leavers nowadays, they complain, often have a very poor basic knowledge of geography - and this applies whether or not they have taken O level geography.

The geography which, they say, young people have failed to learn is the kind you would expect travel agents and tourist offices to value: "Information on national capitals, frontiers, ports, rivers and mountain ranges is often woefully lacking; what is more serious, they (the students) have a hazy notion of distances and the relative size and location of countries".

This translates into travel agents' terms as a lack of "the practical stock of knowledge required by the travel specialists". You can see what they mean. An assistant in a travel agent's shop who was unable to place Benidorm in the Spanish fish and chip belt, and who had no idea that Spain was different from France, might give the wrong impression.

The ATT seem to imply that such an ignoramus



might, on the other hand, be well up in complicated theories of land use or economic or "quantitative geography". "I'm afraid, sir," the tyro travel agent might say, "I cannot tell you whether Torremolinos is in Greece or South America, but I suspect it became an important settlement as a result of the incidence of tourism."

It all seems a bit far fetched, though far-fetched statements about new elements in the curriculum are nothing out of the ordinary. It seems very doubtful if someone who can emerge from 11 years' school without some sort of mental map of the world can have been taught any curriculum, let alone geography - and certainly to blame everything on over-ambitious geographers seems a bit steep. (In the first place, the facts as stated by the experts on tourism need a bit more substantiating and, of course, there is little hard evidence on which to base comparisons between "then" and "now".)

But for many people, who are not geographers, this dispute is not really about geography at all, but about that same notion of general knowledge which, as has been remarked, is all the rage.

Many people would suppose that picking up some sort of a mental world map and a mental chronological table - enough, say, to locate countries in continents, with some idea of major cities and contiguous countries; and to have some meaningful sense of how the sixteenth century comes after the fifteenth and before the seventeenth - is, or should be, part of that residue of knowledge which remains

when everything which has been learnt at school is forgotten: that store of mental furniture brought into use for vital saloon bar discussions of philosophy and current affairs, and the occasional tussle with the crossword puzzle. The details are relatively unimportant - after all, the names change at the drop of the hat and too much dogmatism about frontiers simply causes international incidents. What is important is having a shared hang of the thing.

How insulting to call such a map or such a chronological table, geography or history, but how difficult to operate as a normal, reasonably educated, human being, without it. Surely these are as much part of the life and social skills of an autonomous citizen as those banal but basic requirements, isolated by the MSC and increasingly built into common core curricula.

Of course it may be that here again is an aspect of education which the schools have decided is too difficult for them. Perhaps general knowledge is imparted, or not imparted, at the breakfast table and on the family holiday and in all the other intimacies of domestic life which provide the great socially-divisive reservoir of attitudes and information, which stamp middle-class values on the, by now, heavily social class-laden concept of general knowledge.

Perhaps what the Association of Teachers of Tourism should bring back is not the capes and bays of yesteryear, but the British Empire; after all, it took a South American adventurer to teach millions of Britons where the Falklands Islands are and he couldn't get the name right. And don't forget stamp collecting and, in the corner of the room, the large globe, yellowing with age, to which the didactic parent can refer a questioning child.

If being generally knowledgeable rather than generally ignorant were no longer to be one of the marks of primary and secondary education, but rather of a bourgeois home, the schools would have relinquished yet another socializing function and retreated another step back from the aim of compensating for social disadvantage. It is quite easy to see why the curriculum planners reject the crudity of a curriculum, like that which once ruled in elementary schools, constructed around a basic corpus of general knowledge, and why they prefer a more sophisticated approach to broad areas of experience. But it would be ironic in the extreme if what this did was to reinforce, yet again, the inequalities of home-background as the arbiters of common knowledge.

Second opinion

RC schools' commissions in trouble

This summer two large Roman Catholic diocesan schools' commissions have got into serious trouble. The Westminster Commission has been abolished (Bert Lodge, *Times* August 5) after an inquiry by a Grubb Institute. In June there were press reports that Canon Riley, the years chief executive of the Birmingham diocesan commission, had been dismissed by his diocese.

These events must have implications for those members of the Commission of England who had been suggesting of late that their boards of education be given powers similar to those of RC commissions. The "Allington Declaration" had proposed that these boards take over the powers of boards of governors.

RC commissions began to develop as Hadow reorganization spread slowly over the country. Their powers were much increased under the Butler Act when RC dioceses had to set up secondary schools throughout the country. The comprehensive reorganization begun in the 1960s further enhanced the power of commissions as they tackled the delicate problem of reconciling the conflicting interests of comprehensive schools run by diocese and the already existing selective schools run in many towns by religious orders.

A major confrontation happened at Birkenhead in 1969-1970 when the parents' group attacked the commission and the local education authority for directing 11-plus "passes" to inner-urban secondary schools. Questions were asked in the Commons and the case was decided in the House of Lords in favour of the L.E.A. The greatly added to the apparent authority of commissions.

But some RC critics of commissions suggest they have two weaknesses which could be highlighted by recent events in Westminster and Birmingham. First commissions are not elected, but selected by the bishop and sharing office with elected L.E.A. members.

Second, commissions are not answerable in law because they do not exist in law. The powers of setting up and running RC schools are vested with boards of governors, who in turn carry out commission policy and are responsible for such difficulties as arise.

Bert Lodge reports that the Westminster commission is to be replaced by a "new structure". It will be of great interest to see what that structure is. This opportunity for rational reform must not be missed if similar problems are to be avoided for the future. The "new structures" must obviously be legally accountable but not impeding education, should insist on genuine consultation before policy decisions are taken.

The key question is how the diocese is represented on each of the L.E.A. education committees within its boundaries. If the RC representative is not elected by all those he claims to represent his title is clearly dubious. Thus a radical solution would be to elect the RC representative to be elected by RC parents, even at the risk of increasing such tensions as may exist within the RC community. Were such a scheme successful in Westminster it could become a pattern for other dioceses. It could even begin a new chapter in the history of the "Dual System".

Bernard McManus is a former head of Hugh's RC High School, Birkenhead.

Biddy Passmore reports on an HMI warning against complacency

In-service training gets cash boost from Welsh parents

Parents are now helping to pay for teachers' in-service training in Wales, HMI inspectors have found.

The inspectors say parental contributions have stayed at about 10 per cent of a school's capitation money. But they are being put to a much wider range of uses than they are in England, such as support for in-service training.

In most other respects, the new HMI report on the effect that spending policies had on the eight Welsh education authorities in 1982 paints a similar picture to that of the 96 authorities in England. Tighter staffing has led to stagnation in the curriculum, fewer and tatter books and buildings badly in need of repair. Both in-service training and advisory services continue to be cut. There is "no room for complacency", the inspectors warn.

Overall, however, the report says that 1982 "has not seen any dramatic changes in the level of L.E.A.s' provision or in the schools' responses". The inspectors found few signs that the range of the curriculum had been adversely affected by staffing policies, although they said they were beginning to pose problems for bilingual teaching in small rural schools.

The report, which is based on returns made by district inspectors in January this year and inspection visits in 1982, has a narrower range of findings than the English HMI report and does not single out authorities causing special concern.

Staffing in the principally is generally tight and allows little room for a flexible response to new or unexpected demands, the inspectors report.

Between January 1981 and January 1982, primary ratios worsened in five of the eight authorities, while secondary ratios improved in five. "There is some evidence", the report says, "that at primary level the loss of teachers is proportionally greater than the fall in pupil numbers".

In one authority, only 40 per cent of the reduction in primary staff could be attributed to falling rolls.

Arrangements for supply cover have generally remained unchanged but have got distinctly worse in a minority of L.E.A.s, the Inspectorate says. In one authority, no supply cover is given for 10 days in primary schools where the head does not have full-time charge of a class and in another it is provided only after four days.

In-service training remains at "a relatively low level", the report says. Two authorities have maintained or increased the number of teachers seconded to long courses while another has eliminated support for long courses - and slashed the number supported on short courses from 163 in 1979-80 to 29 last year.

The number of probationers appointed remains low; many are appointed on temporary contracts only.

The slow erosion of advisory services continues, the inspectors note. The general policy of most authorities is not to fill vacant posts - and those who remain have more work than ever.

Language protesters in trek

A fortnight's trek around Wales in support of a campaign to increase teaching in Welsh is due to end with a rally in Cardiff tomorrow.

Twenty members of the Welsh Language Society set off on the 280-mile walk when the National Eisteddfod ended at Llangefni, Anglesey, on August 7. During their journey they have been collecting signatures to a petition urging the establishment of a Welsh Language Education Development Board.

Waiting for the sun to rise on biotech

by Nick Wood

Biotechnology, the sunrise industry predicted to produce such marvels as computers grown from microbes and virtually limitless supplies of cheap energy, should be taught in the classroom, biology teachers believe.

But a lack of money, textbooks and equipment plus a shortage of teachers trained in the new techniques is holding up the subject's development at school level.

These are the main findings of the first-ever survey of the place of biotechnology in schools, the results of which are now being collated by Mr Jim Teasdale, a Sunderland science teacher who has been seconded to University College, Cardiff to research the subject and report back to the Department of Industry, his sponsor.

The findings are based on the initial response to a questionnaire, 500 copies of which have been sent to heads of school biology departments in 20 L.E.A.s.

Mr Teasdale, who stressed his findings were provisional, said that the picture was one of widespread interest in biotechnology at school level, and a great deal of theoretical work in microbiology. But schools lacked the resources and expertise to bring the subject to life by involving pupils in practical work that showed the revolution in industrial processes that is now under way and over the next 15 years is expected to generate a world market of £40 billion.

At present, teachers do not stress the commercial and industrial applications of micro-organisms, he said, mainly because they lack the necessary experience and training. They would welcome help from outside agencies such as firms, universities

and government bodies. "Tomorrow's 'biotechnology' would be very different from today's 'computer society' in that the emergency revolution in industrial processes would impinge directly on only a relatively small number of specialists operating 'behind the factory gates', he added.

But that made a programme of public education all the more important. Otherwise people would go in "fear and ignorance" of the new technology.

A key target is the average 16-year-old school leaver. "If they are going to become informed citizens of the future, they should be aware of the developments occurring in biotechnology," Mr Teasdale said. "It will also make science teaching more relevant to the society in which they live."

The results of the Cardiff research will also be fed to the Secondary Science Curriculum Review, which is conducting a radical reappraisal of the content, style and direction of school science teaching.

Mr Teasdale believes that biotechnology need not elbow out subjects now on the timetable. Its success at school level depends on a greater emphasis being given to the application of microbiology and to the fostering of better links with industry. The revolution in industrial processes that is now under way and over the next 15 years is expected to generate a world market of £40 billion.

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inspectors report; and levels vary greatly between authorities. One 1,500-pupil comprehensive received annual capitation of about £44,000, while a comparable school in another authority got only £32,000.

In primary schools, books are tending to suffer at the expense of basic materials like stationery. At secondary level, the younger, and especially the less able, pupils are given fewer textbooks. Sharing of books is common and in many schools, the purchase of new or replacement textbooks cannot be contemplated.

"The first signs are apparent that inability to replace or renew books is affecting the character and quality of the work done in some subjects," the report says. Three subject areas are particularly affected by expenditure constraints - art, craft and home economics.

In further and higher education, the Inspectorate notes continuing difficulties in matching provision to changing needs and demands. It says this is especially marked in non-advanced further education but some advanced courses also lack the staff and accommodation to meet increased demand from qualified students.

Most unmet demand at non-advanced level seems to be in areas of particularly high school-leaver unemployment, the inspectors say - especially those usually seen as suited to girls. There is still a shortage of places in business studies, clerical and secretarial courses, hairdressing and beauty culture, and caring and nursing studies. But there are also shortages in the conventionally "male" areas of computing and technology.

After severe cuts in 1979-81, funding for the youth service and adult education stayed at about the same level last year, the report says.

The effects on the education service in Wales of recent local authority expenditure policies: an assessment by HMI inspectors, available free from the Education Department, Welsh Office, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF1 3NQ.

Mr Toni Schiavoni, a teacher from Prestatyn, Clwyd, who is taking part in the march, said: "Non-violent direct action played a major part in securing the Welsh television channel and it may have a role to play in this situation".

Grub stake

Somerset is to pioneer the advertising of its school meals service on television as part of a £4,000 campaign by the School Catering service. ITV viewers will be urged to "trench a lunch in a Somerset school" in 10-second spots featuring the catering service's mascot, Mr Grub.

Race probe sought in colleges

by Patricia Santinelli

Teacher training institutions have been asked to investigate the racial attitudes of their staff and to devise anti-racist courses in a letter from the Commission for Racial Equality, which attacks Britain as a profoundly racist society.

The letters which come from a recently set up CRE anti-racist working group, says it has been concerned about the lack of progress in teacher training institutions to implement multicultural and anti-racist components in mainstream training.

It says the group wishes to get away from the concept of introducing multicultural education into the curriculum and to take a positive anti-racist stance where all institutions will examine every aspect of their practices.

"This will obviously include the curriculum, but more importantly will involve the study of the racial attitudes of all staff, methods of recruiting both staff and students," the letter says.

Initial reactions to the letter show that it is not being received in the spirit in which the CRE says it was sent. Professor Bill Middlebrook, head of Trent Polytechnic's school of education and the chairman-elect of the Polytechnic Council for the Education of Teachers, said it smacked of a witch-hunt.

"The whole ethos of the letter is wrong. It represents an extreme statement of the situation and it is conceptually naive to say we are a racist society. It is likely to be counter-productive and lead to opposition to multicultural education instead," he said.

Professor Maurice Craft, of the school of education, Nottingham University and the chairman of the CRE official Advisory Group on Teacher Education which since 1979 has been working towards multicultural education integration, described the new group as wasteful, and said it duplicated the role of the official advisory group.

Mr Gerry German, principal education officer for the CRE, said the group was not intended to duplicate other work, and denied the letter was a witch-hunt. *THEES*.

Running to stand still

The report from the Inspectorate in Wales on the effects of local authority spending policies (page 3) gives much the same picture as the English counterpart - an education system running hard to keep in the same place. Here, again, though levels of provision have not been cut dramatically since the previous year, there are wide variations, warnings of danger, and depressingly little evidence that the system as a whole has the wind or the resources in reserve to respond to new demands.

Some of these demands are already clear, in the shape of the implementation of the 1980 and 1981 Education Acts and the challenge of underachievement. Looming ahead are a new system of examinations at 16-plus and more work on the curriculum.

It is in the curriculum area that the Welsh inspectors share with their English colleagues the fear that tighter staffing ratios will make it progressively harder to provide for "desirable differentiation", as well as the basics.

In Wales, the problem is exacerbated by the bilingual factor, especially in smaller schools in mixed-language areas, but the Welsh inspectors

also give a warning about the cumulative effect of capitation cuts. Beyond the now familiar story of shared textbooks, inadequate work-sheets, and lack of flexibility to replace or renew, they point to the real signs of work suffering in specific subjects because of lack of text-books. "The character and quality of work in art, craft and home economics is singled out as particularly affected. Does this mean that spending in these areas is not a priority because they are not regarded as core subjects?"

The other areas in which alarm bells are sounded are advisory staff and in-service training. At a time when the Inspectorate and the Secretary of State, alike, have been spelling out this need for a strong and effective advisory service to meet increasingly diverse demands, here is more evidence of unfilled vacancies and overstretched resources.

As for in-service training, a measure of the disquiet about the lack of it in schools, FE and adult education, may be the news that Welsh parents are now prepared to help pay for it. The mind boggles as to how they are persuaded to cough up for something so much more intangible than say, a textbook or minibus. Are there microcomputers lying around, waiting for someone to learn how to use them, or is this yet more proof of the traditional Welsh respect for education?

On with the dance

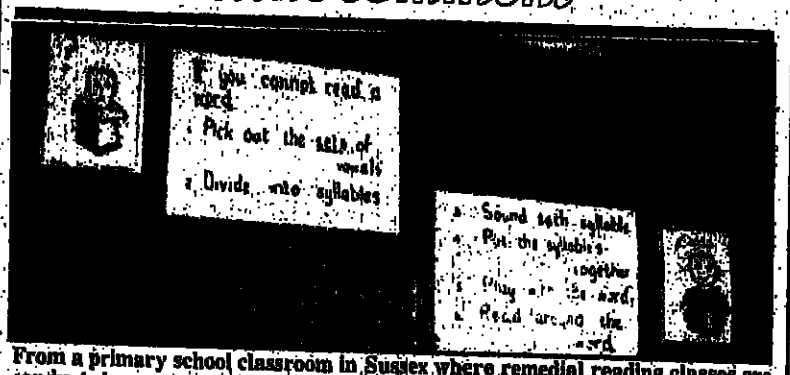
The cult of aerobics (page 6) has proved a money-spinner for those who saw that keep fit combined with rock music and Miss Jane Fonda was just what the affluent society was waiting for. Unfortunately, too many of the instructors who take aerobics classes are unqualified and may be dangerous. An excessive dose of physical jerks, with or without the thump of rock music, can lead to sprains and strains and stress fractures of the kind suffered by over-trained athletes.

So what? A craze for over-fed, guilt-ridden, town-dwellers, earnestly

kidding themselves that by pushing themselves to the limit they can satisfy their fantasies? Partly this, and partly just the irresponsible rag, tag and bobtail, trailed by the main body of aerobic classes, which provide enjoyable and healthy exercise in pleasant surroundings for those who can afford to pay high fees.

There seems an obvious case for some regulation of standards of instruction and accreditation of instructors. But such regulations should be the least necessary to protect the public. The new money-spinners spotted a social need which adult education failed to recognise. They exploited it by aggressive marketing and proved a case for free enterprise in fitness. Good luck to them. But why did the FE colleges let them get away with it?

no comment



From a primary school classroom in Sussex where remedial reading classes are conducted.

PLATFORM

Porn in a wider game

In our area recently a 12-year-old boy was admitted to hospital suffering from hysteria. It was discovered soon after from his friends that the boy's condition was an immediate reaction to what he had seen in a video "nasty": a group of them had been watching while playing truant from school.

We feel this case gives added impetus to the campaign to ban video nasties in support of which this article is written. As parents and educationists we are deeply concerned about the long and short-term effects of these videos on children. In particular, as parents, we are particularly keen to ensure that our own children are protected from the harmful influences of strictly-adult subjects.

The case of the 12-year-old boy is the latest example we have come across of groups of children having held home parties featuring their parents' latest video nasties when they should be in school. There is growing evidence that primary as well as secondary schoolchildren are taking part in these sessions.

Both moral and educational arguments are used, often separately, against the present system whereby adult videos are too easily available in shops. We believe, however, that the moral and educational arguments are so closely related as to be almost indistinguishable.

It is, for example, clearly wrong for 7 or 11-year-old children to watch material which they cannot fully understand and which is likely to pervert and distort their minds. Yet, viewing video nasties has become the "in" craze - rather like reading brown papered copies of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* over 20 years ago.

Unfortunately, this is where the similarity ends because we believe that the habit of schoolchildren viewing adult videos is far worse and more sinister than covert attempts to read good and bad literature. It is likely that the effects of this illicit viewing

Pat and Ken Reid examine the moral and educational arguments for a ban on children watching the sex and violence of the video nasties

will influence the subsequent thinking and behaviour of children at home and at school.

Regrettably, too little is known or understood about the real effect of degenerate videos upon children. Likewise, only a small amount of research has been undertaken in Britain into children's fantasies. Research conducted in the United States suggests that some children and adults react very badly to sadistic and pornographic films and videos. Psychologists have documented cases which show that some children and adults are unable to forget what they have seen on the screen some years after the event. Indeed, recent headlines in Britain have partially attributed the increase in savage crimes against the elderly to video nasties on the evidence of some of the assailants.

While neither of us is generally in favour of severe censorship, we feel that unless some form of legal censorship is introduced soon, we are going to find it more difficult to impose it in the future and the moral pressure on children - already much greater than it used to be - is going to increase further.

Many secondary teachers can testify to the fact that some of their pupils discuss the content of the latest video nasties quite openly at school without



always understanding the implications of what they are saying. It seems to us that the widespread use and appeal of video nasties is telling us a great deal about the society in which we live.

Nevertheless, we respect the view that adults have their own lives to lead and perhaps they should be free to do so provided everyone is clear about the implications of what they are doing.

What is far less acceptable is for adults to have free access to dubious material and screen them in front of

The editor of *The TES* would like to hear from any teachers who have evidence about children's exposure to sex and horror videos.

their children or make them freely available for their children's use with or without their consent. This seems a major dereliction of parental responsibility which may or may not lead to the unhealthy and unnatural premature emotional development of their children with all its unknown consequences. It is an act of gross moral

turpitude by adults who should know better than to put children they love and care for at risk.

The first way to improve the situation would be to change the law. Parents who wish to hire adult videos should be required to sign a legal form stating that the material will not be shown or made available to children under 16 and which guarantees they will be kept in a secure and safe place.

Moreover, the law should be strongly reinforced by imposing a strict liability on the parents in the same way as offences involving the use of drugs.

Hence, children's use of prohibited videos would automatically become an offence by law, irrespective of adult or parental ignorance or place of viewing. In fact, ignorance would be no defence. Officers appointed by the local authority should randomly inspect a small sample of homes which have hired adult videos each week to ensure standards are being maintained.

After all, if teachers in school have to live up to the stringent demands imposed upon them by the existing

interpretation of the *in loco parentis* concept, then they need to feel that parents, too, take great care in the moral upbringing of their children.

The general public needs to understand that it is exceedingly difficult for teachers to insist and maintain high moral standards in children if parents are lax about what goes on in their own homes. We realise, of course, that the same argument could be applied to several issues but there are subtle differences between inculcating children prematurely into the world of horror, violence and sex and providing an adequate breakfast before their children leave for school the morning.

Although the long-term effects of children viewing adult nasties is not known, there does appear to be a common consensus that what shock today is unlikely to shock in the future. This means that the division between decency and indecency is continually being lowered as the video makers seek new and more sensational ways of selling their wares. The truth is that the content of some video nasties would not have been accepted 25 years ago and now they are commonplace.

Until the real effects of accelerating the emotional development of children are known and fully understood, teachers have every right to voice their concern and fear for the moral welfare of future generations.

If they do not, there are few who will fill this role for them and possibly even less whose influence will be respected by a majority of pupils and parents. This may mean preaching a unpopular message in some quarters, but in the long run it will gain the respect and admiration of society.

Pat Reid is a part-time tutor of studies with language difficulties.

Ken Reid is a principal lecturer in education at the West Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education.

NEWS

L.e.a. recruits retired staff in drive for supply teachers

by Philip Venning

Dozens of Manchester teachers who have taken premature retirement are signing up again under a crash scheme by the authority to recruit more supply teachers.

The drive follows a change of policy in April under which schools are to be given supply cover after a teacher has been away for only three days - seven days earlier than under the previous arrangement.

Because of the urgent need to take on more supply teachers, and a poor response from conventional supply teachers, Manchester has been forced to turn to those who only recently retired.

Until the main demand for supply teachers becomes known in the autumn the authority does not know how many extra teachers it will need. But so far 24 who have taken premature retirement have signed up and more are doing so.

The position is complicated by the fact that most supply teachers register in several neighbouring authorities. But according to Dr David Jones, Manchester's senior assistant education officer in charge of schools, they may need to increase their pool of perhaps 300 or 400 available teachers by a further third or half.

Those who have taken premature retirement will be treated like conventional supply teachers and will be paid in multiples of half days.

Unless their earnings, in conjunction with their pension, exceed their former salary, the full value of their pension will still be paid.

Where possible ordinary supply teachers will be given priority but it is unlikely that the demand can be met without using those who retired early.

Miss Joan Davenport, NUT executive member for Manchester, said that they had been pressing the authority to take on more supply teachers and recruit rather retired teachers were recruited than that supply cover remained inadequate.



Projects get the go-ahead

by Hilary Wilce

The development education lobby has persuaded the Government to continue funding two development education projects, in spite of massive cuts in other parts of the aid budget.

Mr Timothy Ralston, Minister for Overseas Development (pictured above), has announced that the London-based Centre for World Development Education, and the Edinburgh-based Scottish Education and Action for Development project, would continue to receive annual grants of £100,000 and £6,000 respectively.

These two projects are the only surviving development education projects with government backing, following the winding up of the Overseas Development Administration's Development Education Fund. When in full flow, this fund was channelling more than £560,000 a year into development education.

The projects' continued ability to draw government funds is thought to stem largely from effective parliamentary lobbying by supporters.

Dr Derek Walker, director of the CWDE, said the grant would cover only a small part of the centre's costs.

Inquiry ordered into college sale

An influential Commons committee has ordered a full investigation into the sale of Hamilton College of Education, Strathclyde.

The Public Accounts Committee has ordered the probe, which will start in November, after receiving the results of a preliminary inquiry by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The college and residences, valued by some experts at £3m, were sold a year ago for £680,000. Mr George Robertson, Hamilton's MP, described the deal as a waste of public money.

Mr Robertson said he was delighted the full facts would now be made public. "The public in Scotland has wanted to know the truth of why the college was sold off at such a trivial price. They will now get the full facts."

"The committee is notorious for embarrassing ministers who have public money."

The college was sold in two lots. Mr Charles Oxley, who runs fee-paying schools on Merseyside, paid £270,000 for the teaching block and playing fields, and a construction company bought the students' residences for £410,000. They will be converted to flats.

Mr Oxley, head of the Hamilton College private school which will be launched with 275 pupils later this month, said he would attend the inquiry if asked to.

"I was not involved in the decision to close down the college or sell the property," he said. "When the property was put on the open market, I put an offer which was accepted."

These proposals have been welcomed by the National Union of Teachers, the National Association of Head Teachers and the Association of County Councils.

This would mean that every maintained school governing body

would have elected parent and teacher governors. Each L.e.a. would also have to establish a separate governing body for each special school.

The Education Secretary said he would not approve joint governing bodies involving special schools unless a strong link of interest or organization could be proved between them.

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TV's influence on two-year-olds 'not fully appreciated'

by Philip Venning

Television plays a significant part in the lives of children as young as two, new research has found.

Dr Cathy Murphy of Nottingham University has been studying ways of using television to encourage language development among pre-school children.

Children were much more likely to remember, and be willing to talk about, programmes that were well illustrated, she found. They also learned more from stories that were shorter and less complicated than many of those broadcast.

Dr Murphy's study was based on 1,500 minutes of talk and interaction between 30 mothers and their 2½ to 3½-year-old children about three ITV pre-school programmes: *Rainbow*, *Pipkins* and *Let's Pretend*.

Hitherto, most research has concentrated on four and five-year-olds. "The younger age group, however, constitutes the largest portion of the pre-school audience and, because many of them have little or no other pre-school provision, television may occupy a more significant role in their lives and development," she explained.

By three, many children were sophisticated viewers, aware of most of the pre-school programming. Two hours' viewing a day was usual, and as much as three or four hours was not uncommon.

Dr Murphy found that few mothers thought the programmes were educational - they largely saw them as entertainment. Overwhelmingly, the

mothers thought the programmes beneficial but could not say why.

Of the 18 mothers who said they sometimes restricted their children's viewing, only four did so because they set a time limit. The most common reason was that the programmes were unsuitable (sex, violence, or bad language), and six mothers switched off frightening programmes like *Dr Who*.

Though many mothers watched at least one of the programmes with their children, inevitably most programmes were seen by the child alone. Where mothers did talk to their children about the programmes it was normally during the broadcasts. Less than half the mothers said they had done things based on programme ideas, and the majority had not used books or materials linked to programmes.

Dr Murphy concludes that programme makers should put less effort into encouraging follow-up activities and concentrate on "language interactions".

Programme notes had largely failed to help mothers who had not seen the programmes understand their children's utterances. Mothers tended not to listen to what their children said because they thought they knew from the notes what had happened.

Talking about Television: opportunities for language development in young children by Dr Cathy Murphy, available free from Charles Mayo, Education Department, IBA, 70 Brompton Road, London SW3.

The sins of the fathers...

by Ngalo Creqeur

A threat of "harsh sanctions" against children whose parents flout parking regulations near a Middlessex school has been withdrawn after the matter was raised in the Commons.

Governors of the Michael Sobell Sinai School, a Jewish voluntary-aided primary in Kenton, had warned parents in 1981 that the use of cars along the road, Shakespeare Drive, was prohibited, and that they would support Mr David Band, the head, in

"taking whatever measures he considers appropriate against children whose parents flagrantly ignore the simple regulations".

They argued that this was "fully justified since the action of an inconsiderate or thoughtless parent can so easily put a child's life in jeopardy".

However, Mr Robert Dunn, junior minister with responsibility for schools, told Mr John Gorst, Con-



Building wins RIBA award

A Royal Institute of British Architects' award has gone to Newlands primary school at Yately, Hampshire (pictured above). Another educational institution to win an award was Robinson College, Cambridge.

Picture: Pat Hunt

NEWS

Scholarship appeal

by Diane Spencer

The National Deaf Children's Society has launched an appeal to establish an annual scholarship for an experienced teacher to train as a teacher of the deaf.

At present, teachers are being discouraged from becoming trained teachers for the deaf because they cannot get local authority grants very easily.

Mandatory grants are available only if graduates decide immediately to do a year's extra training to qualify them to teach deaf children. If they decide to get some general experience first, as is often considered desirable, and then take a full-time course, the grant is discretionary.

The society approached Mr Hugh Ross, then minister for the disabled, earlier this year, and he contacted the Department of Education and Science on its behalf. The DES was unwilling to introduce the necessary legislation to allow mandatory grants so the society decided to "fill the gap".

Mr Harry Clayton, director of the NDSCS, hopes to raise £50,000 by next May to start the scheme next September. The fund has already reached £12,000.

Members feared youngsters might

Alarm at increase in child gamblers

Gamblers Anonymous is setting up a junior branch and offering help to parents whose children have caught the gambling bug.

It also plans a schools campaign against one-armed bandits and electronic gaming machines after hearing of a dramatic increase over the last 12 months in the number of youngsters using them compulsively.

A spokesman said: "We have had hundreds of calls for help from parents who are worried their children have become addicted to these machines."

"Children as young as 12 are becoming involved. They spend their parents' money, their own pocket money and even steal so that they can gamble."

Gamblers Anonymous approved the scheme for a junior branch at their national conference in Birmingham, attended by a group of teenage gamblers, on Sunday.

Members feared youngsters might

feel their own problems were not serious if they came to ordinary meetings and heard adults talking about losing huge sums of money.

The conference also gave the go-ahead for a parents' branch of the sister organization, Gam Anon, which helps the relatives of gamblers.

Delegates decided to issue a new teaching pack for schools, with a warning of the dangers of gaming machines, and to improve their contacts with heads, parent-teacher organizations, youth training offices and youth organizations.

They warned parents to look out for signs that children were gambling, such as a constant need for money, the disappearance of valuables from the house, and unsociable behaviour.

The conference was told that at one recent school visit 160 fifth and sixth formers were asked if they gambled. One hundred admitted that they did, and two 14-year-old girls said they went to the dog-races twice a week.

Health education getting better and better

by Nick Wood

Health education in schools has undergone "explosive" national growth over the past decade, the Health Education Council says in its latest annual report.

Seven out of ten secondary schools have a written policy on health education, compared with just a handful 10 years ago. Last year, 5,000 teachers attended health-related in-service training courses; the annual average in the mid-1970s was only 100.

Backed by a yearly budget of nearly £1.5m, the HEC is supporting 12 projects aimed at making tomorrow's adults fitter and healthier than their

parents. All age groups, including youngsters on vocational training schemes, are catered for. Spending on education and training jumped by over £500,000 this year.

Smoking and drinking are the council's two main targets. The "My Body" project for children aged 10 to 12, launched nationally at the end of June, is said to have cut the numbers of boys and girls who dare to try their first cigarette.

A big new project aimed at cutting alcohol abuse among young people will be unveiled in the autumn.

More cash wanted for books

Spending on school books should increase by £60m a year to maintain a good standard, the National Book League claims this week.

In its annual update of recommended figures for spending on school books, first published in 1979, the league says local education authorities should spend £13.45 per pupil each year in primary school and £21.22 in secondary to ensure a "good" stan-

dard, and £11.22 and £18.33, respectively, for a "reasonable" standard.

Mr Michael Murland, chairman of the working party which produced the first report, *Books for Schools*, in 1979, said these figures contrasted starkly with last year's spending average of £6.27 for primary and £8.78 for secondary pupils. That meant that £59m was spent on schoolbooks in 1981-82.

Spending on school books should

NEWS

Nearly all profit from the keep-fit cult of aerobics is going to private centres. Hilary Wilce reports

How to shed pounds ... getting 'the burn'

Pound, pound, pound goes the driving beat of the relentless rock tape as secretaries and solicitors, typists and teachers, sweat and strain to achieve a silhouette as lithe as Jane Fonda's.

It's summer in the city and the heat in the studio is the wrong side of stifling, but enthusiasm is undimmed. Aerobics, with its enticing mixture of sex and pain, has become top of the adult education pops, the class that has thrust aside those creaking favourites, yoga and keep fit, and put trusty stalwarts like flower arranging and conversational Italian in the shade.

Yet those few colleges and adult education centres which have reached out for this booming market have found their hands tied by bureaucratic caution. Some education officers refuse to see aerobics as anything more than a passing fad, while others have justifiable fears about the health hazards of such classes.

For although aerobics is strenuous, tiring, and harmful if badly taught, there is no official teaching qualification and no national organization to set and monitor standards.

In Norfolk, where medical warnings about strenuous exercise classes have recently hit local headlines, a centre which wanted to offer aerobics this autumn has been told it must run a course in "aerobic-type" exercises.

Mr Bernard Golding, the area head of adult education, said he was worried about the dangers inherent in aerobics, especially for older students. He also feared that "once people have paid their money, if they find it isn't exactly what they've seen on television, they'll start to complain."

In neighbouring Essex, a Canvey Island centre hoping to run aerobic classes is waiting for guidance on whether the authority considers the potential tutor adequately qualified. Adult education officers have asked the physical education inspector for guidelines, but these have not yet been forthcoming.

Inner London, whose adult education guide lists an impressive 125 entries under the heading physical education, runs no aerobic classes.

Mr Stan Woolam, inspector of physical education with the Inner London Education Authority, says the classes offer the full range of what the public wants, but that the public perhaps does not realize it.

"This is where we've fallen down, if we've fallen down at all. We haven't changed our titles to become attractive."

Students say this is not the whole story. A Victorian school hall, with draughty cloakrooms and a cassette player lodged on the edge of the stage, does not offer the glamorous image they are looking for.

It is in the private dance centres



with funky names like "Pineapple" and "Abraxas" that aerobics has taken off, and in modern local sports and leisure centres that its close relatives, popmobility and dance-along keep fit, have gained such enormous popularity.

The story is reflected in the profits - a rare occurrence in the worthy world of continuing education. The book that started it all, *The Jane Fonda Workout Book*, has sold 280,000 copies in Britain while Pineapple, one of London's main dance centres, went public last autumn its shares trebled in price in three months.

Today Pineapple is still packing in 1,000 clients a week, who flock to fashionable Covent Garden to "stretch" and "condition" their bodies, as well as to take aerobics and dance classes.

The story is the same elsewhere. Big Apple, home of the Denise Lewis

Method of Body Conditioning, is planning three additional West End studios and is also going into the health food and sports clothing business, while away from the capital less trendy but equally successful operations are springing up everywhere.

In Nottingham, a personnel officer who attends a weekly aerobics class has estimated that her teacher is making at least £200 a week from just a couple of hours' teaching, while at the Harrow Leisure Centre up to 500 people pack the hall every Tuesday night, for one of the weekly popmobility sessions.

Sessions such as those in Harrow are run by the local authority - although not by the education service - and usually cost about £1. Prices in the private centres are much higher. If you want to be able to pre-book classes at the Big Apple you must pay almost £52 to become a member, and then pay a further £2 per one-hour class.

And although the big centres train

their own teachers and maintain reasonable standards, there are places where students can find themselves paying for nothing more than the chance of a nasty injury.

Anyone can hire a hall and set up as an aerobics tutor, and many do. The majority of classes are run by people with dance or keep fit qualifications, but in some cases teachers have nothing behind them but the experience of being a successful student.

One of the commonest faults of classes is that students are not given enough time to warm up, and are not brought down slowly from their peak of activity. Another is that this peak is excessive.

The painful lessons of experience have taught enthusiasts not to preach the value of the "burn" of muscle pain, but as one London dance teacher said: "The aim of an awful lot of classes is still just to get the burn ... it goes on and on, till you're dead on your feet and you feel over with exhaustion."

But for those who want to start

good, professional classes the problems are immense. Mrs Hazel Mann, a freelance journalist, wanted to qualify as an aerobics teacher but was turned down by a London dance centre because she was not a professional dancer.

Her local education office directed her to the teaching course run by the Keep Fit Association but she found this was unsuitable for aerobics so she returned to the education office. Her further ideas were forthcoming although they did advise her to display a notice disclaiming responsibility for injuries if she started to take classes.

"After that I tried about eight or nine classes, all running in my garage in Essex," Mrs Mann said. "The range from the not very professional to the definitely dangerous."

Ms Lesley Mowbray, physical education director of London's Young Men's Christian Association and a trained teacher, agrees that most aerobic teaching is frankly awful.

The aerobic classes she mentions are graded into beginner, intermediate and advanced, and she also runs an introductory fitness course which encourages people to look at different aspects of the subject, such as developing stamina and strengthening muscles.

"My ideal would be to educate people to do a combined programme so that they do a bit of everything. I hope we're going to see an end to the idea that only aerobics is the answer."

She believes that schools and colleges have missed out over the last 15 years on the developing enthusiasm for getting fit and healthy, and Mr Wendy Turner, assistant physical education teacher at St Margaret's School, Bushey, Hertfordshire, agrees.

She has imported popular dance centre aerobics teaching into school. After trying out classes at the Big Apple she persuaded three dance teachers from the centre to visit the school and run two after-school sessions in the hall, for an enthusiastic 70 pupils.

The pupils paid £1.50 a head for the sessions which covered the costs, and they loved it, according to Mrs Turner who is now hoping to arrange further sessions.

"Anything with movement and pop music is popular, especially with girls," she said. "If they can't catch a ball or whatever it is tends to turn off traditional games, this suits almost everyone."

Even so, the educational world remains aloof and Ms Jennifer Holbrook, secretary of the dance section of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, fears that it is likely to remain that way.

Until the world of further education becomes less concerned with academic study, she says, leisure interests such as aerobics are likely to stay out in the cold.

Nick Wood finds out why the latest fashion in exercise can be good for you ... and why it can be harmful

Pump in that extra oxygen - but make sure you can survive to enjoy it

Aerobics, the buzz word among today's fitness fanatics, can trace its origins back 20 years to the early 1960s when Dr Kenneth Cooper, then a medical officer in the United States Air Force, came up with a programme of exercises designed to counteract the sloth and lethargy then prevalent in America.

Dr Cooper, who has written *The New Aerobics*, regarded widely as an excellent introduction to the subject, claimed he had come up with something original. It is probably more accurate to say that he had successfully switched old wine to new bottles. Aerobics describes nothing more revolutionary than activities which increase the body's consumption of oxygen. Strenuous bending and stretching exercises, performed with or without the driving beat of the disco, are one way of doing this. But there are other, less glamorous, ways of achieving the same end. Running, swimming, cycling, jogging, and even a brisk walk, all also boost oxygen consumption.

But why should anyone want to increase uptake of oxygen? The answer is the direct link between aerobic capacity - a person's ability to consume oxygen - and fitness. The greater your ability to soak up oxygen, dependent on absorption by the lungs, distribution by the heart and uptake by the muscles, the fitter you are.

The benefits should be immediately apparent. With extra oxygen coursing through your veins, no longer will errant fourth-formers escape your grasp or buses fade into the distance. Or, so the theory goes.

The mechanism by which regular exercise builds up your aerobic capacity is known as the training effect. It is well understood by professional athletes and sportsmen who, if they are to stay in peak condition, must spend most of their waking hours on the move.

Aerobic exercises, besides strengthening the heart, lungs and circulatory system, also make the limbs and

joints more supple and tone up the muscles. Not surprisingly, then, at least one professional football team is using them to tune up for the new season.

But that is not the end of the story. According to Dr Edward Smith, medical officer at the Dounreay nuclear power plant and an occupational physician with a keen interest in physical exercise, aerobics has a host of other beneficial effects.

Writing in last week's issue of *Current Practice*, a newspaper for doctors, he says it can help cure stress and do away with the need for tranquillisers or antidepressants, promote weight loss, especially when linked with dieting, and make it easier to give up smoking - an activity that dramatically lowers your aerobic capacity.

He also cites research evidence that regular aerobic exercise lowers your chances of suffering from heart disease and circulatory disorders such as varicose veins. It can also increase your resistance to viral infections such as colds and flu.

Aerobics "certainly adds up to sound preventive medicine," Dr Smith says. "Ultimately, it seems likely that aerobic exercise can lead to an increase in life expectancy."

But, as Dr Smith and others point out, aerobics does have its darker side. Muscles, tendons, ligaments and bones, made rusty after years of neglect, don't take kindly to being suddenly jerked into action, especially among people on the wrong side of 30.

The result can be painful aches and strains and, occasionally, more serious stress fractures of the limbs which are now becoming commonplace among top athletes, supposedly as a result of too arduous training programmes.

Dr Smith adds: "The benefits certainly far outweigh the dangers. But there are some possible problems which arise because people try to do too much too quickly."

He also stresses the importance of taking things slowly and following an



● Aerobics ... strenuous bending and stretching exercises performed to a disco beat



exercise programme tailored to your age and general level of fitness. "Generally, there should be no problem up to the age of 30; just choose your activity and get on and enjoy it. Between 30 and 50 you are still good for anything, but it is advisable to seek some advice first if you are considering something particularly strenuous."

People over 60 should avoid strenuous pursuits, he warns. Instead, they should stick to walking or some leisurely cycling or swimming.

Dr Michael Spira, a GP in Luton who also works at a London health screening clinic, is even more inclined to stress the hazards of aerobics. He says that about once a fortnight a patient, typically a housewife in her twenties or thirties, hobbles into his surgery complaining of the effects of her local aerobics class.

Dr Spira puts the blame squarely on the many unqualified and ignorant people who are running aerobics classes. "Many classes are not supervised properly and the people running them don't know much about what they are doing. Some even stand with their backs to the class and don't look at what the people are doing."

He also condemns the tendency of some teachers to encourage people to strive for the muscle "burn" - the

intense pain that arises from violent exercise. "It is dreadfully irresponsible and should not be allowed," he says.

To combat these problems Dr Spira has drawn up a survival guide for anyone contemplating joining an aerobics class. At all times they should feel "comfortable" and they should never push themselves so hard that they haven't got the breath to chat to the people nearby. Nor should they drive themselves to the point of feeling "pain, nausea or giddiness."

Aerobics is a "first rate way of achieving fitness," Dr Spira says, but people should start with a fairly gentle programme and never push themselves beyond their natural limitations.

Mrs Victoria Sishi, of the Society of Chartered Physiotherapists, says her members are reporting a growing number of injuries from jogging and aerobics and are worried by the current emphasis on "violent" exercise. "The heart is a muscle like any other and can be overstrained just like any other."

The society is also concerned about dance centres that advertise the fact they have a "a physiotherapist" on site. People should be sure they are treated by a chartered physiotherapist she emphasizes.

Homework overtaken by life in the fast lane

by Nick Wood

Teenage motorcyclists live up to their devil-may-care reputation, according to a new research study, involving 1,000 fifth-formers.

Compared with their more pedestrian classmates, they are less likely to sacrifice their evenings to homework and far more likely to be out enjoying themselves, blowing their money on girls, drink and cigarettes.

Sadly, for some at least, life is short. The typical teenage tearaway, flinging his Yamaha along the byways, is a hundred times more likely to come to grief than the family man at the wheel of his Ford.

The findings come from the latest issues of *Education and Health*, the journal of the Schools Health Education Unit at Exeter University. Mr John Balding, the director, reports that one fifth former in five rides a motorbike and that there are striking differences in attitudes and behaviour between those who do and do not ride. His figures apply to boys alone because only a handful of girls ride motorcycles.

For instance, seven out of ten of the 40 motorcyclists at four Berkshire and Buckinghamshire schools said that they had done no homework the night before, compared with five in ten of their 160 peers.

Overall, those on two wheels are something like 50 per cent more likely to have a part-time job, to spend their money on alcohol and tobacco and to claim girls among their close friends. The survey, carried out before the change in the law, also reveals that they are far less likely to bother with a seat belt when travelling by car.

"A picture of a young man seeking adulthood, independence and perhaps an exciting image is not hard to create," Mr Balding observes.

Drawing on other data, he suggests that youngsters may sensibly be divided into two groups for the purposes of health education: the rebels who spurn their books for the thrills of the fast lane and the bookish "homework types" who not only deliver their prep on time, but also scrub their teeth frequently, wash their hands after going to the lavatory and make regular visits to the dentist.

"I rather suspect that the 'homework type' is already safety-educated and will seek out safety knowledge at the appropriate time of life," Mr Balding comments.

If health education is to make much impact on the recalcitrant remainder, it needs to go beyond the simple transmission of good practice in areas such as diet, exercise, smoking, drinking and road safety, Mr Balding concludes. Instead, such issues should be given greater point by stressing their importance for the everyday life of young people. Lessons should focus on how, say, the amount you drink affects your relationships with your friends, your parents, the law and society in general.

inspector for history and social sciences. Professor R O C Norman, who took up the appointment as Chief Scientific Advisor to the Ministry of Defence on July 1 has become the new President Elect of the Royal Society of Chemists.

Dr Roger Iredale is to become Principal Education Adviser to the Overseas Development Administration.

Three new members have been appointed to the Advisory Board for the Research Councils. They are Professor Peter Mathias, Dr Derek Roberts, and Mr Martin Wood.

Dr Raymond Rickett, Director of Middlesex Polytechnic, has been co-

opted to the Council of the Open University, for a three-year term of office. Miss Ann Burkitt has been appointed director of education to the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, and will take up this newly created post in September.

Mr Michael E Leonard, who is head of the Sixth Form at Stantonbury Campus, has become president of the National Association of Careers and Guidance Teachers. Professor Peter Parish, bonar professor of modern history, University of Dundee, has been appointed director of the Institute of United States Studies in the University of London.

EXTRA MATHEMATICS EXTRAS

The 16 page Mathematics extra in March 26 issue containing an article by Dr W. Cockcroft is available in reprint form. This, together with a four-page résumé on the Cockcroft Report, originally published in the TES, will cost 80p (p & p included). Send all orders to the address below, enclosing your cheque/PO (no cash please) made payable to Times Newspapers Limited.

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National qualification call

Educationists called this week for a national aerobics teaching qualification. Such a qualification, along with laid down standards and guidelines, would help authorities to meet the public demand for aerobics classes, a number of education officers said.

They cited the Keep Fit Association as an example of how standards can be upheld and tutors trained in an area of popular leisure activity.

Mr Stan Woolam, physical education inspector with the Inner London Education Authority, said: "We would very much welcome a national qualification, although obviously not one with a commercial bias such as something organized by a firm making exercise equipment."

He did not think that the Keep Fit Association would be able to expand its activities to include

aerobics. The various dance organizations might be able to do something although he sensed a reluctance among them to dilute their art with popular exercise programmes.

A similar situation had arisen with the boom in self-defence classes, Mr Woolam said. Now the Martial Arts Commission is in the process of producing a national scheme.

Meanwhile Inner London runs its own courses for fitness tutors, all of whom have to be qualified in a specific area such as dance or football coaching.

The 10-week course runs for one evening a week and includes the physiology and psychology of various kinds of exercising, how exercises affect different age groups, and how to set out circuits and devise exercise programmes.



People

School Appointments:

Miss Wendy Jarvis has been appointed head teacher of Eglinton Infants, Woolwich. She is at present Head of Infants at Monson Primary New Cross.

Mrs Barbara Roberts has been appointed headteacher of Argyle Primary school, Kings Cross. She has

been acting head of the school since Christmas.

Mrs Stephanie Garrard is to be headteacher of Deansfield Junior, Rochester Way, London.

Ms Christine Whitford, has been appointed headteacher of Abbey Wood School, Greenwich, London.

Miss Barbara Sauls has been appointed headteacher of St Leonard's Church of England Primary, Mitcham Lane, London.

Dr Barbara Thomas becomes headteacher of Beatrice Tate School, Bethnal Green, from September.

Miss Jean Howard has been appointed headteacher of Hither Green Primary, Lewisham. She has been teaching at Heber Primary school, East Dulwich.

Mrs Anne Jacques has been appointed headteacher of Woodberry Down Infants, Woodberry Grove, London. She comes from the staff of Beavers Holt Primary School, Putney.

Administrative Appointments:

The University Grants Committee's Working Party on Northern Ireland has been established. The membership is Professor K. M. Clayton (Chairman), Sir David Bates, Professor P. M. Bromley, Dr S. Cootson, Mr J. Doherty, Miss Anne Duffton, Mr P. Tansley, Mr John Sellars.

Mr Tom Nolan has been named as Chief Officer of Northern Ireland's South Eastern Education Board. Dr Ian Steele is to be ILEA's new staff

Long hot summer of parental discontent

Education officers are slumping back exhausted as this year's exercise of allocating pupils to schools comes to a halt.

All but a few parental appeals to the new committees set up under the 1980 Education Act are over. Those remaining seem to be on especially stubborn cases, or concern pupils whose parents have only recently moved into the area.

Only a minority of parents opt for a school other than the one allocated after they have expressed their preference. Education authorities do their best to fit these children in but, where they don't think there is room, parents now have the right of appeal to an independent committee that decides the matter.

This is the second year in which the new committees have been operating.

Last year they heard some 8,000 appeals. This year some authorities have been almost overwhelmed by a sharp increase. Some, on the other hand, have seen a slight decrease, perhaps because of falling rolls.

Others, like Newcastle and Dudley, have had only a handful of appeals both this year and last, often where the new committees were simply grafted on to an already elaborate procedure which satisfied parents.

Why have numbers in some authorities doubled or even tripled? One reason given by education officers is that parents have seen that the new system gives them a chance of getting their way. Last year, the success rate nationally was one in three appeals going in the parent's favour, but in some areas it was as many as one in two.

That is a far higher success rate than parents achieved under the old system, where the only appeal was often to the Education Secretary. In 1977, for instance, only two out of 1,100

Biddy Passmore talks to worn-out education officers about the new committee system set up to handle appeals against allocation of school places

complaints submitted to the DES over secondary school allocations were successful.

Last year, the new system had to be launched in a rush. Councils were too busy setting up the committees to spend much time publicizing them. This year, parents not only had the benefit of better official publicity - they also had Conservative candidates drumming home the message about the Parents' Charter throughout a general election campaign.

But political rhetoric about choice is a mixed blessing, as more than one weary officer pointed out. "Parents complain about unsuccessful appeals because they think they've got a God-given right to the school of their choice," one muttered.

The independence of the new committees is also hard for parents to accept. Under the Act, committees must consist of three, five or seven members nominated by the authority (or the governors in the case of voluntary schools). Councilors must not outnumber lay members by more than one and the chairman must not be a member of the education committee.

In Hertfordshire, where the number of appeals doubled this year, there has been "significantly more correspondence" asking the education authority to justify the appeal committee's decision.

"We say we can't because the committee is independent," an education officer commented. "But it's difficult in some cases to convince them that the i.e.a. doesn't pull strings".



Sir Keith Joseph: under the old system parents appealed to him

Apart from parents' greater awareness of the new system, he attributed the increase in Hertfordshire - from about 220 to about 440, nearly all at middle and secondary transfer stage - to local circumstances, such as peak numbers, schools with a high reputation and, in one area, reorganization proposals. The extra demand is concentrated on a small number of schools.

Last year, about one third of parents got their way; this year, it will probably be lower - more like 15 to 20 per cent.

In Surrey, on the other hand, although the number of appeals has

trebled, to about 300, about half have been successful both this year and last. That is because they are spread over a large number of schools, about half of them primary, where it is easy to squeeze in an extra two or three pupils.

In Manchester, demand has centred on just a few - and particularly the three all-through comprehensives, Parris Wood, Whalley Range and Burnage, whose sixth forms were repressed last year by Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary. Parris Wood, a popular high school in a good residential area, has a waiting list of more than 100.

Last year, just after Sir Keith's decision was announced, the appeal committees agreed to let an extra 26 pupils into Parris Wood. But they have been less soft-hearted this year. The authority wrote a stiff memo about the effect of the extra pupils, who are causing problems with staffing and curriculum right through the school. As a result, only an extra two or three are expected to be allowed in this year.

Overall, the number of appeals in Manchester is slightly down from last year's total of 344 (all secondary), of which 56 were upheld and 55 subsequently withdrawn by the parents.

In Sheffield, the number of cases is comparatively small because it is one of the authorities that already had a system of appeal committees before the 1980 Act came into force. The earlier committees have now been renamed the "admissions section" and the new committees have been added

as the top tier.

Another sore point with education officers, of course, is the time and effort taken by the new system. Education departments do not normally get involved in the running of committees: they leave that to the chief executive's department to sort out. But they still have to find people to sit on the committees. And it is education officers who put the authority's case to the committee.

There is the expense too. Hertfordshire's 10 appeal committees are estimated to have cost an extra £20,000 last year - the bill for temporary clerk for the committees, correspondence and travel expenses - and that on no account of officers' time. Mr R. Stubbs, education officer of the London Education Authority, reckoned their appeals cost £50 a place a year.

Nonetheless, education officers bear their extra burden with good grace.

Mr David Whitbread, assistant education officer in Hertfordshire, reflected a widespread view when he said: "I'm all in favour of some sort of committee to make a judgment rather than leaving it as a sort of running battle between a certain education officer and the parent. But I feel some of the legalities within which we have to work create difficulties. For instance, the procedure laid down by tribunals doesn't always match local circumstances".

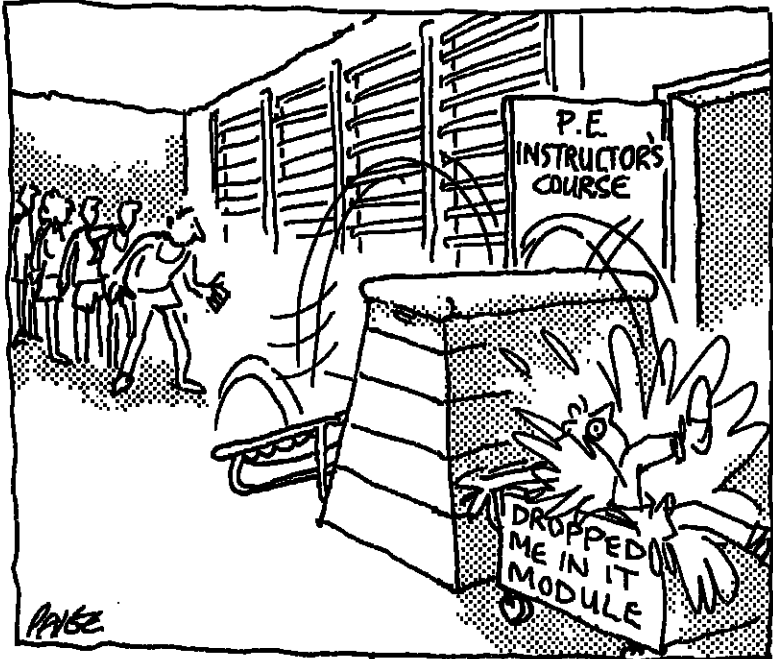
Dr William Kneen, deputy CEO of Sheffield, did not feel the procedure was too detailed. "Justice has got to be done," he said, "but I think democracy ought to be prepared to pay for it."

"I personally think it's a very good system even though I've suffered from it all summer."

SPORT

Mike Skinsley on the PE jobs that would intimidate a Daley Thompson

Only athletes with an interest in ceramics need apply...



practical subjects". Conrad didn't even know what PE stood for; he only knew he liked what he did when he was there.

"I like this job, Sir. 'PE' games - interest in microcomputers".

"No, Conrad, I don't think it means

Next we looked at the kind of facilities in some of the schools. There

Extracurricular time for a PE teacher is the other 18 hours a day he is not teaching

was certainly a choice ranging from "good" through to "excellent" with "first class", "superbly equipped", "outstanding", "extensive and developing" somewhere in between. Conrad was puzzled by one school which had "excellent facilities including swimming pool, gym, sports hall, all weather pitches, specialist art, ceramics and heavy craft workshops".

He did not know which games to play in the workshops.

I failed to get Conrad to understand that it would not be advisable for him to apply for the girls' PE post despite the statement that the i.e.a. was an "equal opportunity employer" and that the post was open to anyone of any sex. He still fancied that job! Nor could I really answer his question on how a "registered disabled person" say in a wheelchair, could possibly teach or referee on our mudbath we call a football pitch in the middle of winter.

"Sir, if you don't sit around in the sun every week, what else do you have to do?"

We spent some time looking at particular expertise required in one sport or another, or "in all aspects of the PE and games curriculum". But mostly there were statements about the expectations of the teacher during extracurricular time.

"What's that, Sir?"

How could I tell Conrad the well-known fact that extracurricular time

for a PE teacher is the other 18 hours a day that he is not teaching during the week or 23 hours a day at weekends, allowing, of course, an odd hour for sleeping and refreshment.

He began to get the message as we read through some vacancies like "commitment to Saturday morning and after-school activities essential", "looking for someone prepared to be totally involved in inter-school games", "participation in a thriving programme of extracurricular activities expected" or "willingness to be involved in the school's hectic extra-curricular programme all-important qualifications for the job".

Some of the advertisements needed to be read between the lines to see that those schools claiming a "fine physical education tradition" or "a high reputation" were also wanting someone very committed to making schools teams and their results a top priority.

"Sir, none of these adverts says anything about what you have to teach in lesson time, do they?"

It was not easy to explain to Conrad that many schools and headteachers considered it more important to see their school teams being successful than to consider that all pupils were receiving a well-taught and well-sourced PE curriculum. In addition, there should be an opportunity for all pupils to participate in a wide range of extracurricular activities which should not necessarily be centred around the school team.

This was far beyond Conrad's understanding. He now knew he could never become a PE teacher so he became resigned to asking his usual question.

"Sir, what have we got for PE tomorrow?"

"Hug gliding, parascending and sub-aqua diving. That OK, Conrad?"

"Great, Sir, but can you really do those things?"

"Of course, Conrad. PE teachers have to be able to do anything and everything all of the time."

Mike Skinsley is head of the PE faculty at Hartsfield School, Bristol

Mark Jackson spends a day at Sutton Coldfield with youngsters seeking places on the Armed Services YTS



Army life... begins with a briefing



...then gym work



...and more gym work



...followed by squad training



...and more gym work

A chance with the Paras

Some of the unemployed school leavers joining the Armed Services youth training scheme which begins next month will do their year of military training with the Paras, the elite corps of airborne shock troops whose controversial training methods have prompted criticism.

The army recruit selection centre at Sutton Coldfield, which is preparing to test its first batch of applicants for the scheme next week, has been told that the Parachute Regiment will take 80 for training during the next six months.

They will all have to be under 17½ because the vacancies at present are only for Junior Soldier training and not for the full adult Para course.

Applicants will all have to reach the normal Para standards of physical fitness, which are much more exacting than those laid down for recruits to most other regiments.

They will not be made to jump from aircraft because it is not part of the first year's training of boy Paras, but Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Duncan, the centre's commanding officer, says that recreational parachuting will be available.

Colonel Duncan says that the recent BBC Television series on the Paras seems to have encouraged youngsters to volunteer as regular recruits for the regiment.

To back this, I heard a Welsh 17-year-old, fresh from a year's brick-laying on YCP, insist throughout a 30-minute interview with one of the centre's personnel selection officers, that for him it was the Paras or nothing. The only explanation he

could give was: "Well, they're the best, aren't they?"

The centre will make no real distinction between the way it assesses regular recruits and the applicants for the scheme. It regards the one-year trainees, in fact, as potential candidates for any vacancies which may exist in the regular ranks at the end of their training.

Similarly, it is prepared to suggest to would-be recruits who pass the selection test, but for whom there are no suitable vacancies in the regular ranks, that they should accept the one-year training under the new scheme instead.

This is possible only if they meet the scheme's eligibility requirements, which are the same as those for the civilian YTS. A difference is that, unlike the YTS, the armed services scheme has no priority built in for 16-year-olds: places are allocated entirely on the suitability of applicants for the kind of training vacancies available, although for the next few weeks most of them are likely to be for the under-17½, simply because junior training begins each September.

In fact, the first six places in the Army's version of the YTS had already been filled before the first batch of applicants arrived. Colonel Duncan was given authority from the first week of this month to start allocating the places to any suitable youngsters among the candidates trying to get into the regular Army. All six of the youngsters have been allocated to infantry regiments.

The centre, which has been hand-

ling 550 candidates a week, is about to expand, not primarily to meet the needs of the new scheme, but because of a rationalization of the Army's selection facilities. Sutton Coldfield expects to be able to handle about 650 selections a week, including applicants for the new scheme.

Like the regular recruits, the trainees will be able to change their minds right up to the moment they report to their unit, but unlike them they will be able to leave if they get fed up after they have found out what Army life is really like.



Paul Hill of Basingstoke, one of the six already allocated places.

YTS shortfall prompts re-think

by Patricia Santinelli

Manpower Services Commission officials and ministers are to discuss contingency plans for meeting a possible shortfall in the number of eligible young people coming on to the Youth Training Scheme this September.

Only last month Mr David Young, MSC chairman, said his major worry was having too many places because it had become clear that more young people were getting jobs or were planning to stay on in education than anticipated. This was later disputed by the Institute of Careers Officers.

MSC plans involve relaxing the eligibility rules for YTS and drawing up a priority order of young people whose exclusion for entry into the scheme has become a major cause for concern. Under present regulations only 16-year olds have a real guarantee of a place in the scheme.

According to Mr Geoffrey Holland, director of the MSC - who does not personally believe there will be a shortfall - there are three major groups who could be used to fill the places. One group is the unemployed 17 year olds.

The second group are disabled and handicapped youngsters over 16 and a small number over 18 for whom there is widespread concern. The third group consists of those who entered the Youth Opportunities Programme but because of the change over to YTS received only short training and are now unemployed and with no place to go. Both careers officers and the

education service have argued that they were being unfairly treated.

Mr Holland pointed out that it was very important for the credibility of the scheme that there should be enough youngsters to fill the available places.

"Not to have sufficient numbers would undermine the scheme as well as the mechanism we have established of bringing managing agents and different groups together. This is not only a significant step for young people but could be a model for adult training" he said.

The MSC is also preparing proposals for next year's YTS scheme which it intends to put to commissioners and Ministers in September. It has to reconcile three key concerns: no additional funds; the need to include all 17-year-old school-leavers; and quality control. It is thought that commissioners would insist on quality rather than expansion if forced to choose.

One way forward being considered by the MSC is a major expansion of Mode A schemes - those run by colleges and voluntary agencies.

At the moment the MSC is turning away proposals for Mode A schemes and telling companies to apply again for next year, and according to Mr Holland this is in all sectors of industry.

But he stressed that an expansion of Mode B would be necessary, not only because in some parts of the country it was not possible to run Mode A schemes, but because Mode B were of

very good design and quality and their sponsors were particularly willing to take on the most disadvantaged young people.

To ensure the quality of YTS, the commission is planning shortly to advertise the post of head of quality assurance.

The person appointed will work with a team and their role will be not only to improve the schemes, but to train MSC staff and decide on the choice and maintenance of the accredited staff training centres. - *THE S*

● In a drive to ensure that black school leavers get a fair share of places on the new Youth Training Scheme, the Manpower Services Commission is undertaking one of the biggest exercises in ethnic monitoring in the country.

Every young person entering the scheme will be told that the commission needs information about their race to prevent discrimination. In discussing their category with employers, young people may, if they disagree or object to being described, refuse to reply, Philip Venning writes.

Detailed information will be kept confidential though overall statistics will be available to the MSC who will keep an eye on ethnic recruitment.

The collection of statistics on racial origins remains controversial. But the MSC decided it was necessary after discussions with the Commission for Racial Equality.

FEU pushes ethnic strategy for colleges

The government-backed Further Education Unit is promoting a strategy for multicultural curriculum development in further education colleges, Diane Spencer writes.

Genuine equality requires multicultural education for all, as an integral part of continuing education and training, it says in a new policy statement.

Many institutions and individuals fail to see the need for change while

others are acutely aware of it, but require support to translate policies into practice, the FEU says.

The unit points out that unemployment is disproportionately high among blacks, training is poor and "there is no lack of evidence to indicate that high employment has exposed a level of racism that is disturbing, if not potentially dangerous".

Curriculum development must con-

centrate, not only on improving access to courses, reducing cultural bias in syllabuses and examinations and improving teaching strategies for black students, but it must also create an increased awareness of racism, however unwitting.

The FEU is anxious to work with other organizations such as the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit and the National Association for Multiracial Education to achieve its aims.

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"Sir, can I do a YTS course to become a PE teacher like you?"

The question came as a surprise, as I was umpiring the staff cricket match against the fourth year. I was day-dreaming at square leg, just soaking up the sun to the sound of leather on willow or was it plastic on polyaram? Conrad was not the brightest of the fourth-year team but he usually scored more runs than the rest put together. He had never grasped the concept of field placings in cricket, so always took square leg where he knew he had to stand next to the umpire. "It must be great being out here playing games all week."

"Well, Conrad, firstly you must..."

"How's that?"

Saved by the collapse of the last staff wicket - "Chippy" Ireland bowled by "Typhoon" Thomas of 4C for none.

I knew I had Conrad first period next day so I took in some back copies of *The TES*. I thought it might illustrate more clearly what would be expected of him if he were to become a PE teacher. By reading through some of the adverts I pointed out to Conrad that first he would have to become a "graduate" with "good qualifications and experience in all the main spheres of PE (whatever they are). He could not teach PE unless he had "energy and enthusiasm" and possessed "all-round ability".

In addition to having a "professional interest in... netball, hockey, dance, gymnastics, outdoor pursuits, canoeing, rock climbing and athletics" he would also be expected to be able

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OVERSEAS

Taking sides over neutrality

Should community education be ideologically neutral or actively committed to achieving stated goals? Delegates to an international conference in Dublin last week argued fiercely over the issue, which came to be symbolized most clearly in the question of whether or not it was wise to encourage a Muslim community in England to set up its own girls' school.

Some delegates felt that a culture under pressure was entitled to protect itself by establishing a separatist religious school. But feminists, among others, found this hard to accept. One woman spoke for many when she said: "The Muslim men from the mosque are saying, 'We want to control our women, will you help us?' I for one won't."

Nevertheless, the week-long International Community Education Conference ended with a ringing declaration about the need for community education throughout the world, suitably amended by a Bangladeshi to require community educators to raise the awareness of the poor to their rights.

The conference was organized by the International Community Education Association, whose president for the next four years is Mr Andrew Fairbairn, director of education for Leicester. It brought together 460 people from schools, universities and community bodies from more than 30 countries.

Inevitably, with such a heterogeneous gathering, there were quite different views of community education on offer. The National Community Education Association of the United States is still somewhat coloured by the limited objective of opening up school premises to adults, and its latest newsletter was full of the fact that a US warship had adopted a school. Others were more concerned to look at what communities wanted or needed, before deciding what educators might supply.

The clearest exposition of that view came in a powerful keynote address by Father Gerry Pantin, from Trinidad. The former head of science at an island grammar school, he had decided in his early 40s to start working

Richard Bourne reports from the International Community Education Conference in Dublin

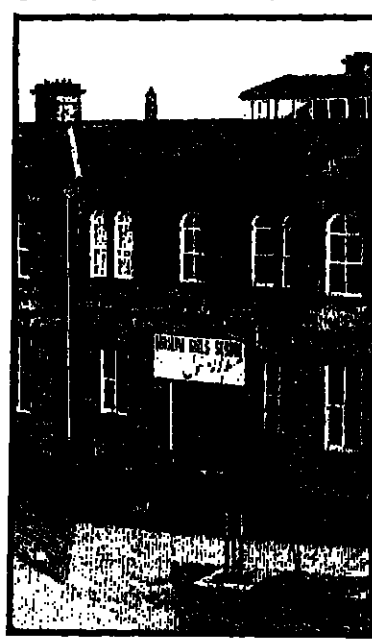


Muslim girls in Bradford... should their community set up its own schools?

as a community worker in the slums of Port of Spain.

"All teachers are born ignorant; I have had the unusual experience of having ignorance thrust upon me at the age of 42. Imagine what it is like to have an honours degree in science, a diploma in education and a licence to teach theology, and to walk into the ghetto world of switchblades, guns and sudden violence in an attempt to 'help' the community. Suddenly, I was a child again... a little voice within me whispered, 'Why not ask them how they wanted you to help?' I leapt upon this as from an Archimedian bathtub," he said.

But Father Pantin's strategy of "respectful intervention", which argues that it is better to support a scheme that the community wants even if you think you know better, did not get overwhelming support. In particular Mr Tom Lovatt of Northern Ireland, complaining that community education looked like a catharine



Muslim girls in Bradford... should their community set up its own schools?

wheel, striking sparks in all directions and showing no coherence, was not alone in hoping that the conference would give stronger guidelines on ideals and methods.

The conference was arranged round four themes - family and health, response to unemployment, adult basic education and life-long learning, and groups with special needs. The unemployment theme was possibly the most successful, simply because the crisis was so clear-cut and it was easier for representatives from Third World and post-industrial countries to empathize with each other's difficulties.

"The unemployment group, which was particularly concerned with youth unemployment, heard an inspired address by Professor Yehudah Paz of Israel, who emphasized that unemployment is a social not a natural phenomenon and is capable of being overcome by community and cooperative action. He was witheringly critical

of the idea that there is "a book of recipes for development", or that the transfer of technology alone could create viable work. From his background as a member of a kibbutz and the director of the Afro-Asian Institute for Trade Unionists in Tel Aviv, he appealed for more education for cooperative production and enterprise creation.

Mr Keith Kleinbard, of the National Community Resources for Youth scheme in the United States, stressed the importance of involving youth in community services as well as job creation. He argued that young people needed five opportunities - a role; a share in decisions; time to reflect; a close relationship with an older adult; and a group experience. In New York youngsters on his scheme had done such varied tasks as producing a three-way dictionary (English-Chinese-Spanish) and running a sex advice service.

After Paz and Kleinbard, Mr Ken Atkinson, deputy director of youth training for Britain's Manpower Services Commission, seemed a little pedestrian. The ICEA president, Mr Fairbairn, asked him why community schools and colleges were not being involved in the YTS. Mr Atkinson claimed that the Department of Education had found a philosophical antipathy some youngsters might feel to being forced to stay on at school. Mr Fairbairn, and others from Britain, were unimpressed.

The next ICEA conference, in 1987, will be held in Africa, probably in Nairobi. But it is clear that the association's finances, organization and even its philosophy, will have to be changed before then if it is to be truly international and effective.

At a meeting for European delegates it was suggested that new efforts should be made to recruit East European members. There were also appeals for a working party on aims and objectives - the term "community education" is little known in Germany or southern Europe, although it is sometimes practised - and a carefully planned regional conference in a couple of years' time.

Private blow, public coup

AUSTRALIA

Luis Garcia on new priorities for a bigger budget

Forty of Australia's wealthiest private schools will have their government assistance cut by 25 per cent next year with more reductions likely in the future.

The list of schools is yet to be finalized by Senator Susan Ryan, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs.

But it is believed that some of the country's best-known private colleges could be affected - including the Grammar School and King's School, Sydney, and the Grammar School, Scotch College in Melbourne.

The decision has come as no surprise since the Labour Party made very clear during the Federal election last March that one of its priorities would be to review the system of government funding for private schools.

In any case, the 40 schools which will be affected are seen, in the public mind at least, as anything but "needy". They cater for the elite, their fees are high and the national allocations were quite likely to go towards improvements of the cricket pitch, a bigger swimming pool, or to build a new modern science lab - facilities which most government schools could only dream about.

Overall, the new guidelines have been a major coup for Senator Ryan. She managed to convince the Cabinet to increase education spending by \$A65m (£30m) in real terms to a total of \$A3,363m. No mean feat at a time of government belt-tightening and deficits.

Of this, the schools system will get a total of \$A1,258m with the rest going to the tertiary education sector, where some 3,000 new places will be created at universities and tertiary colleges.

Senator Ryan also announced two major new programmes for schools. The first is called the "participative and equity programme" and will see the government about \$A7m in 1984. The programme is aimed at keeping students longer at school, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Senator Ryan said that the Government's aim was to achieve a situation where, by the end of the decade, most young Australians complete the equivalent of a secondary education, either at school, or in a technical and further education college, or in a combination of school and work.

The other new major programme unveiled by Senator Ryan is in computer education which will cost \$A6m next year.

Other measures include:

- \$A20m grant for improvement of schools in disadvantaged areas
- An allocation of \$A5m for schools serving the Aboriginal community
- A grant of \$A250,000 to increase participation rates by girls in tertiary education
- The abolition of the so-called "percentage link" system which has prevented private schools from increasing government funding in line with increases for state schools

Many advocates of computer education look with envy at the aggressive approach adopted in Canada by the Ontario Ministry of Education, which has outlined a detailed plan to provide one microcomputer for every six children by 1990.

But the new interest in computer education has exacerbated an old problem - an unequal access to resources. A survey of the south-east has found that schools offer relatively few classes involving computers,

Applying new techniques to traditional art values

Sir - Bernard Denvir's examination of the "technological" threat to fine art departments in higher education (Art's last stand? TES, July 29) (Art's last stand? TES, July 29) prompts me to comment on similar pressures in secondary education.

Mr Denvir asks: "Is fine art an essential part of design education? Should students be taught techniques or attitudes?" and "who is going to win out: the hard-headed 'technological' realists with their mechanistic concepts of art and design, or the often muddled traditionalists with their belief in the primacy of visual literacy?"

At my school we have evolved courses which seek to reflect the complex relationships between art, design and technology. In years 1-3, art staff work with drama, music and dance staff in running an "expressive arts" course for all pupils.

Art work here, as one would expect, is of a relatively open-ended character centred on the exploration of form and of visual ideas through appropriate techniques. But art staff also contribute to a parallel craft,

design and technology course, mainly in the areas of design drawing and in some aspects of three-dimensional work.

While this is a tightly-structured course, work is not dominated by mechanistic techniques: skills are introduced as necessary to achieve ends which embrace both technical and aesthetic considerations. Nor is art here concerned mainly with aesthetics: graphic skills are taught as a means of exploring ideas and values, of communicating information, and as part of decision-making.

And in years 4 and 5, as well as providing a general course in art, staff also work with fabrics staff in running a textiles and dress scheme where the aims embrace practical and aesthetic issues, and personal values. Art studies can gain in interest and value from an extended range of visual, practical and technological problems. If art is offered solely as a self-contained study it may lean towards introspection too much. Art and other practical creative work can

also seek to provide opportunities for pupils to apply wider knowledge and experience to their tasks, especially because such opportunities to apply knowledge creatively are limited in schools.

In answer to the opening questions - certainly art helps to provide the visual language which is one of the cornerstones of design and therefore of design education. But new technologies and materials have made new forms practicable in art, design, music and the media, both beneficially and otherwise, and we must get to grips with this firmly, in schools. If we are to serve our pupils well - whether or not they intend to follow art and design professionally. Surely, "technological realists" and "muddled traditionalists" are not the only roles open to art teachers?

JOHN SIDNEY
Head of Design
Sidney Stringer School and
Community College
Coventry



Distracted: Girls in a coeducational London comprehensive...

Single-sex oasis

Sir - I was blissfully unaware that I taught in a "ghetto" school until I read your "Comment" on July 29, which applies the term to "single-sex schooling with its range of women heads and science teachers". The article falls hook, line, and sinker for the usual bait: it lists achievements which men covet, and criticizes women for failing to attain them.

From a feminine point of view, may I gently suggest that women do not need to hold the top jobs in order to influence the whole direction of a school: indeed, to set the atmosphere in which everyone works? Many actually prefer to stay in the classroom where they have real contact with their pupils, and leave some poor male to battle with the administrative duties and attend all the meetings. Fine teachers are too canny to be distracted from the work they love.

Surprisingly enough, a girls' school with a largely female staff is normally an intelligent, tidy, efficient body, with a capacity for hard work and mental penetration which may astound the unsuspecting visitor; where responsibility is carried confidently and pupils can turn equally to

domestic, athletic or academic tasks with the same precision and elegance. This is no ghetto: more an oasis where it is possible to establish, in an atmosphere of some clarity, the principles on which one will stand in the inescapable mêlée of later life.

I am far more concerned about sexual injustice - which certainly exists - than about sexual discrimination. If it were not enshrined in the statute books with a derogatory meaning, I should like to rescue the word discrimination for the fine quality of judgment which we hope to encourage in our pupils - a judgment which recognizes the inner attributes of a person and passes over the superficial attributes about which we have demanded legislation.

Finally, I am puzzled by the statement that "in the real world the women never get the good jobs". Not only does this country have a female monarch and a female Prime Minister, but it entrusts almost all its children to women for the first and most formative years of their lives. Blinkers off, gentlemen!
R. J. BROADBENT
41 Rostevor Road
Stockport
Cheshire

NCB reports

Sir - Dr Gray (TES, August 5) draws attention to confusion caused by Professor Flew (TES, July 22) with regard to the National Children's Bureau reports on educational standards.

As both letter-writers refer to me by name, perhaps I could briefly clarify two points. First, the NCB has published two reports and, insofar as I have made any comments, "authoritative" or otherwise, they refer to the 1980 report *Progress in Secondary Schools*, not to the more recent 1982 study. Second, Professor Flew refers to me as a former colleague - it is he who has left the University of Reading, not I.

It is well known that I view the results of studies which "adjust for social class" with scepticism because there are complicated technical and philosophical issues involved in inter-leaving which are not easily resolved. I often find the resulting conflicts unenlightening and unhelpful. I am therefore not surprised that schools and departments of education find more important research topics to investigate.

All teacher/pupil interaction is not and should not be purely task-oriented, and with smaller class sizes these days, I would argue that the development of such a relationship is not only possible, but prerequisite for successful teaching.

I am all in favour of increased teacher/pupil contact, but feel that if a child has a particular worry he should be helped and reassured as soon as possible.
G. J. KENNEDY
Headteacher
Clifton Green County Primary School
Swinton

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When the hesitating stops...

UNITED STATES
Peter David on the growing momentum of computers in education

After years of hesitation, computer manufacturers in the United States appear to have decided that educational institutions could become important users of computers, for teaching as well as for management. Recent months have seen a profusion of initiatives in which computer companies are helping schools and colleges to acquire and use computer facilities.

The most pathbreaking initiative is in higher education. Last spring the Massachusetts Institute of Technology announced an agreement with Digital Equipment Corporation and IBM, which are to provide the MIT with a total of nearly \$30m (£35m) in computers and support services over the next five years. In addition, the MIT has begun a campaign to raise up to \$20m to help fund the project, named Project Athena, after the goddess of wisdom.

The aim of the project is twofold: to devise a computing system in which machines speak to each other in the same language and enabling students to transfer easily from machine to machine; and to discover just how helpful computers can be in traditional teaching at university level.

In the school of engineering, Project Athena is expected to use the computational and graphics power of computers to help students grasp complex abstract concepts, giving them an intuitive feel for structural behaviour. Computers are also ex-

pected to help students understand fluid mechanics and the structure of crystals - fields which involve spatial relations in two and three dimensions.

According to Paul Gray, the MIT's president, the project will extend right through the university's curriculum. "Foreign language teachers are already exploring the use of personal computers to make learning a second language faster and easier. And political scientists, economists and managers are studying new ways to use computers to help them 'visualize dynamic models'."

The huge scale of Project Athena will put the MIT and its industrial partners well ahead in the educational computing race. It is expected to involve thousands of terminals in networks around the campus. The terminals will be supported by mainframe computers with storage and printing devices serving the classroom and homework needs of students.

Project Athena is, however, entirely experimental. "We believe we can help students learn by using personal computers and computer graphics in a new way, but nobody is sure exactly how," Dr Gerald Wilson, dean of the school of engineering, emphasized when the scheme was announced.

Although the MIT initiative dwarfs similar projects in the secondary school sector, computer manufacturers have been assiduously courting high schools with offers of free equipment and instruction.

In March, for example, the Tandy Corporation unveiled a proposal to offer free computer instruction to one teacher from every school in the United States. Each teacher would receive more than 20 hours of instruction in programming and the educa-

tional use of computers, at a cost to the company of more than \$100m. A less expensive scheme by IBM offers schools free hardware as well as free instruction. The company is spending \$8m to give 1,500 microcomputers to secondary schools in three states. Training sessions are being offered this summer.

The Control Data Corporation, meanwhile, is spending \$6m giving computers and computer software to more than 100 colleges teaching engineering.

Despite all this activity, the United States, like Britain, still appears to be many years away from the time when computers will be a common and routine part of classroom teaching. One problem is that schools still account for only a fraction of the total demand for computers and software. Another is that teachers are still unclear about how to use computers. Many initiatives designed to enable the Federal government to hasten the spread of educational computers have been supported by teachers' unions and educationalists' organizations. The National Association of Secondary School Principals has thrown its weight behind a Bill that would give tax relief to companies giving equipment to schools.

Many advocates of computer education look with envy at the aggressive approach adopted in Canada by the Ontario Ministry of Education, which has outlined a detailed plan to provide one microcomputer for every six children by 1990.

But the new interest in computer education has exacerbated an old problem - an unequal access to resources. A survey of the south-east has found that schools offer relatively few classes involving computers,

and also how these "many initiatives" seemed to ignore the needs of the BAC, who would have no doubt also criticized peace studies if they had found such instances.

However, Mr Walker did make one very good point: "We must remember the vulnerability of children in believing what they are told by teachers and what they see in newspapers." He should remember the extremely biased wallcharts that the Foreign Office sent unsolicited into all secondary schools last year.

Does Mr Walker believe that:
• these are not propaganda? and
• teachers should be content with displaying the wallcharts without talking about their one-sidedness?

Mr Walker, and the PAT as a whole (for siding with him at conference) are in actual fact attacking the profession in the conduct of all those involved in teaching peace studies without themselves responsibly researching their remarks before they make them. I hope your readers note this, and consequently treat the PAT's opinion

Balance of peace

Sir - I would like to bring a few points to the notice of the Professional Association of Teachers, particularly to their treasurer, Mr David Walker, as a result of the article "Warning on propaganda posing as peace studies" (TES, July 29).

"We are in schools to educate - not indoctrinate," said Mr Walker at the PAT conference, implying that peace studies consist of indoctrination. He should be aware of the survey commissioned by the British Atlantic Committee which reported back in February this year. Mr Colin Gordon, who conducted the survey and is a member of the BAC, reported:

"I was extremely impressed with the way in which teachers of peace studies take care to be as unbiased as possible. They are, in fact, presenting a good balance of views."

Perhaps Mr Walker would care to detail exactly what the "many instances of groups giving undue emphasis to party political views" are;

how he came to discover them, with the relevant courses and teachers named; and also how these "many instances" seemed to ignore the needs of the BAC, who would have no doubt also criticized peace studies if they had found such instances.

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Mr Walker, and the PAT as a whole (for siding with him at conference) are in actual fact attacking the profession in the conduct of all those involved in teaching peace studies without themselves responsibly researching their remarks before they make them. I hope your readers note this, and consequently treat the PAT's opinion

of peace studies with the respect it deserves. There are a number of members of Teachers For Peace in the PAT, and I am sure that they are as annoyed and dismayed at the PAT's attitude as I am.

Personally, I totally fail to understand in what way Mr Walker links peace studies and "party political views". Learning to live in peace with all races and cultures, learning how wars and violence can develop their own momentum; these are universal human issues, and Mr Walker is wrong to try to reduce their importance in this off-hand fashion.

Peace education, by the way, is not just the teaching of peace studies. In whatever form. Like moral education and language education, it is always going on, whether positively or negatively according to the type of teaching and type of school.

STEVEN KURT POPPER
Membership Secretary
Teachers For Peace
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Senator Susan Ryan

FEATURES

Play the game you cads!

Eric Midwinter on how the early heroes of boys' comics still influence the British



Those who recognize the catchphrase of the Western Brothers' variety act will not be misled by the false proposition that the phrase, "the famous five" was coined to describe Enid Blyton's insufferable quintet. The Famous Five were, of course, Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Hurrey Jamset Singh and form-mates of Greyfriars School, the invention of the inextinguishable Charles Hamilton, alias Frank Richards.

As befitted the creator of Billy Bunter, Frank Richards was a voluminous author. He died an octogenarian in 1961, recorded in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the most prolific writer of all time, weighing in at 100 million words, no fewer than 80,000 words a week at the sublime height of his powers. Through the medium of the *Magnet* and *Gem*, he constructed a vast genre of schoolboy fiction which was enormously influential, especially throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

There were progenitors. In 1857 Thomas Hughes published, over the signature "An Old Boy", the seminal *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, with its beatification of Arnold's Rugby and its puff for muscular Christianity. It had a stoic Roman flavour, with the Brutus/Cassius friendship of Tom and "Scud" East and the Caesar-like figure of Thomas Arnold. Yet in today's more pluralistic and clear-sighted society, it is the bully, Flashman (Mark Anthony?) who has enjoyed a second childhood in George MacDonald Fraser's amusing novels.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the pietistic silliness of Frederick Farrar's *Eric, or Little by Little* (1858) and what Benny Green has called "the jockstrap jocosities" of Talbot Baines Reed's *The Fifth Form at St Dominic's* (1885) had followed. Many early twentieth century teachers were devotees of Rudyard Kipling, one of the reasons for the intense glorification of empire in our schools then. In the 1930s, and with a handkerchief stuffed in the back of my cap to protect my neck from the merciless Mancunian sun, I once, on Empire Day, acted as locum for Cecil Rhodes.

The public school preparation for being, in Hughes' phrase, "scattered over the whole empire" was again recalled by Kipling in *Stalky and Co.* although our elementary teachers perhaps missed the ambivalent subtleties of Kipling's unusual mix of vice and virtue. One perceptive and assiduous Stalky peruser was P G Wodehouse, who, in 1902, produced *The Pothunters* and then a languidly elegant series of schoolboy novels based on St Austins, Wrylyn and other ancient piles. Predictably more mocking and lighter in style than his rivals, Wodehouse delectably interpreted his beloved Dulwich for thousands of readers.

None the less, it was the sheer volume of Richards which was most telling. Several generations of children, the enormous majority of whom - like Richards himself - never poked their noses inside a boarding school, were captivated by its ethos; and Billy Bunter was to become a significant literary prototype, on the level of Long John Silver or Quasimodo. Less attention has been paid to what this actually meant in terms of the values of all those intent



Tom Brown teaches the bully a lesson.

readers, who blissfully ignored the fact that they were the "oafs" or "townies" at whom the alumni of Greyfriars or St Jim's scoffed. In that eloquent masterpiece, *Classic Slum*, Robert Roberts voices no doubts about the effects on darkest Salford.

"The standards of conduct observed to Harry Wharton and his friends at Greyfriars set social norms to which schoolboys and some younger teenagers strove spasmodically to conform. Fights - ideally, at least - took place according to Greyfriars rules: no striking an opponent when he was down, no kicking, in fact no weapon but the manly fist. Through the Old School we learned to admire guts, integrity, tradition; we derided the glutton, the American and the French. We looked with contempt upon the sneak and the thief. Greyfriars gave us one moral code, life another, and a fine muddle we made of it all. I knew boys so avid for current numbers of the *Magnet* and *Gem* that they would trek on a weekday to the city railway station to catch the bulk arrival from London and buy first copies from the bookstall."

"With nothing in our own school that called for love or allegiance, Greyfriars became for some of us our true *alma mater*, to whom we felt bound by a dreamlike loyalty. Over the years these simple tales conditioned the thought of a whole generation of boys. The public school ethos, distorted into myth and sold among us weekly in penny numbers, for good or ill, set ideals and standards. This our own tortures, religious and secular, had signally failed to do. In the final estimate it may well be found that Frank Richards during the first quarter of the twentieth century had more influence on the mind and outlook of young working-class England than any other single person, not excluding Baden-Powell."

With its uniform costing 15 shillings in pre-1914 days, and with its curious pastoral and backward-looking character, the Boy Scout movement was never perhaps the power, numerically or psychologically, in the great cities that it sometimes appears to have been. There were other social influences. There was the Band of Hope, which in the last decade of the



last century had three million children enrolled. With its forceful temperance injunctions, lantern slides and sketches, it was the only organized entertainment for many. In their eighties, my maternal grandmother and my great-aunt Bertha could still recite the warning couplets of their Band of Hope evenings, verses like "The Bridgekeeper's Story", with lives lost because of demon drink.

Honesty obliges me to add that grandma and great-aunt remembered the medium much longer than they obeyed the message of the B of H, and they lived, to enjoy that parody of the Soldiers' March from *Faust*: "Booze, boys, and bidden the Band of Hope". There were the churchy organizations, like the Church Lads Brigade, especially strong in the Manchester area, and sporting pill-boxes, bugles and drums. But the CLB (or "Cheeky Little Buggers", as my father more colloquially translated the acronym) and allied groups never infiltrated the psyche of the child populace as did the exploits of the "Famous Five" and their confreres.

In the wake of *Magnet* and *Gem*, and right through to the centre of the century, every boys' comic - *Skipper*, *Rover*, *Champion*, *Wizard* - adopted its own mini-minor public school. Perhaps the best-known was *Hatapur's* Red Circle, with Mr Smugg, an austere descendant of Greyfriars Mr Quelch. Even some of the bizarre "my sainted aunt" patois was assimilated; and some public school slang - soccer - was absorbed into the popular argot. From the stiff upper lip to the feet on the ground, the heroic code of pragmatism and protocol was observed, with modesty in victory and phylax in defeat, the foremost virtues. There was a recent case of a school, examined by HMI, where "settling in the gym" was part of the curriculum.



Biggles fights back

The typical Englishman - "ici vient l'anglais avec son sang-froid habituel" - is a Victorian. In the seventeenth century the English were thought of us were later to regard the populace of a banana republic: we had revolutions, killed kings, and were generally blood-thirsty, ideological and passionate. It was the nineteenth century before Daniel O'Connell was able to remark that the Englishman had all the qualities of a poker, except for its occasional warmth.

It was obviously a cyclic process. The new structures of business growth and colonization determined the superstructure of national ethics. They were faithfully expressed in the schoolboy fiction of a hundred years, and also in the old boy heroics of the Mason, Buchanan and Wren genre. It is summed up most succinctly in Henry Newbolt's *Vilai Lampada* when, with "the Gatling jammed" and the desert sand "sodden red", the schoolboy cry of "play up, play up and play the game", remembered from that night when there was a breathless hush in the close, rallies the ranks.

Continental observers saw in Perfidious Albion's playing-field criteria a refusal to grow up produced by the stunting regime of the boarding school. Many of the heroes of the hour certainly sailed close to the wind of that harsh judgment. W G Grace, the world's first internationally famed sportsman, was agreed by all to have remained, intellectually and morally, an adolescent, while T E Lawrence, by most accounts, was a congenial story teller, asexually affixed about 12. Wodehouse himself was described by J B Priestley as "a brilliant super-deluxe schoolboy". It is interesting that the theological texts of persistent childhood - J M Barrie's *Peter Pan*, and *Scouting for Boys* by Baden-Powell (Chatterhouse and Mafeking) were published respectively and adjacently in 1904 and 1908.

The consequence of all such pressures was that this home and colonial store of ethics informed other parts of the culture. An illuminating example is the 1930s' view of Robin Hood as Greyfriars under the Greenwood Tree. In their Lincoln Green uniforms, the boys of Sherwood Forest play their jolly japes on the Bunteresque figure of Friar Tuck, and then led by Robin (Harry Wharton) with the faithful Bob Cherry figure of Little John at his side, turn from the poached venison (the midnight feast in the dorm) to the business of outwitting their cholerick and insecure beak, the Sheriff of Nottingham. The kindly, dignified headteacher, Richard Lionheart, is, like all school fiction heads, benignly remote, Maid Marion is the tomboyish, sister-like aide, no longer the sensuous witch of earlier lore, but not bad for a girl. And then there was Biggles.

Perhaps the most remarkable effect of this cultural phenomenon was that it allowed Will Hay, preeminently in the 1930s, to assume a comic personage which has passed into folklore. Gradually civil and shiftily evasive, his crisp "Good morning, boys" set the mood immediately for the contest between pupils attacking with impudent smartness and teacher defending from behind a barrier of pedagogic platitudes. "The Schoolmaster Comedian", on stage, radio and film, personified the mediocre teacher, clinging incompetently to the trappings of authority and he always, rightly, insisted that his well-thought-through "cameo" was not a distortion but merely an exaggeration of the genuine. But it is unlikely that Will Hay could have so successfully cultivated his caricature had

not the culture been saturated with fellow pedagogues in distress.

"Professor" Jimmy Edwards inherited Will Hay's mortar board, but he was hearty and bucolic, relying on unspoken answers to highly charged questions like "Why did the Australian go in the bush?" for boisterous laughs, whereas Will Hay was more intent on conveying the nuances of beleaguered schoolmastership.

What is interesting is that one of Will Hay's schools was Narkover, based on Beauchamp's log of its activities in the *Daily Express*, while the Edwardian academy of Whacko was Clitchbury. That penitentiary labelling reminds that the boarding school, like the prison, provides the artist with a static arena, a complete world of its own, for the unfolding of conflict. The excluding, discrete institution - the prison of Ronnie Barker's *Porridge*, the hospitals of a dozen telly series - with its claustrophobic atmosphere may easily become a metaphor for society. Alan Bennett's *Albion House* and Lindsay Anderson's allegorical film, *If*, both utilized the public school in this way.

Did we, as *Albion House* hints, unconsciously consider our island home as one huge public school during the 1930s? With Stanley Baldwin the cautious, benevolent head and George V the revered chairman of governors, maybe the English succumbed to the chirpy slang of Harry Wharton right down to the last jolly wheeze. A nation which ordinarily left school not much after the new boys were rolling up at St Jim's was comfortably conversant with the remove, prefects, fags and prep. That code, that cast of mind, both because of its real existence and its idealized literary expression or comic parody, remained powerfully influential. Montgomery wanted to knock Rommel for six, and, even today, *Grange Hill* is criticized for shirking its dutiful allegiance to the strict laws of the cloistered Medes and Persians.

Nature imiteth art. Children, and successful children who become teachers, reproduced schools in that image. The most direct effect was in the grammar school. The grammar school, the English flower of the northern Renaissance, was in splendid bloom in Elizabethan times, when few lads lived more than a dozen miles from one. It became sterile and dormant, but, in the aftermath of the 1902 Education Act and the 1904 Memorandum on Secondary Education, it was faintly resuscitated. It struggled on, until it withered and just about perished, the victim of its own narrowness, unfairness and inappropriateness.

While it lived, it aped the houses and prefects, and uniforms and curriculum and what-not of the public school, real and imagined. What is worse, it transmitted that irrelevant and alien life-style to the secondary moderns and, latterly, even the comprehensives, some of which are still over-preoccupied with the form of the XV. Once again, as with so many of our institutions, the bold, unflinching assurance of the Victorians and Edwardians has triumphed. We approach the last decade of the twentieth century with their mould of the school intact and with a plethora of continuities between then and now undisturbed.

It was not - it is not - all harmful. There was a fineness as well as a smugness about the code. But there is no sadder conclusion to be reached about British society now than that it has been, and seems to be unable to create a school in its own image and in tune with its own style and character. Harry Wharton might just rule OK in the space-age remove, and when the conversation turns to "social engineering", tip your cap in the direction of Frank Richards.



Will Hay, 1936

FEATURES

Dickson's volunteers

Where are they now? Twenty-one years after Alec Dickson set up Community Service Volunteers, Ian Bradley looks at the effects it had on the lives of some of the earliest CSVs.



CSVs past, Anne Loch (left) and Lindsay Mackie, 1963...

left Clifton College in 1962 intending to read maths at Oxford. The six months which he spent at a mental hospital in Dorset changed all his plans. He read psychology and has spent the rest of his life researching and teaching in the field of mental handicap.

Bill Mather did a stint as a CSV attached to Liverpool Social Services Department after five years as an accountant working in industry. "It provided a unique opportunity to explore a new career which I had vaguely been thinking about." He is now chief executive of the Apex Trust, the charity concerned with finding employment for ex-offenders.

For most of the early volunteers, of course, CSV did not have such a dramatic effect on their future lives. The majority remember it chiefly as an incredibly welcome and refreshing break from years of fairly cloistered academic study. In the words of Paul Harrison, author of *Inside the Third World* and *Inside the Inner City*: "For me the great thing that CSV brought was liberation from the educational treadmill, to pause for breath and be able to stand back from the hothouse climate of the direct grant grammar school."

It is, of course, impossible to assess exactly what effect the experience of CSV has had on those who have been through it. It would be nice to report that it radicalized public school Tories and turned would-be stockbrokers into social workers. This has undoubtedly happened in some cases. But in general the experience of being a CSV seems to have confirmed those already committed to careers in the caring professions and made relatively little impact on the careers or political views of others.

A survey carried out in 1972-73 by Public Attitude Surveys found virtually no evidence of a change in social and political outlook being brought about by the experience of being a CSV. The great difference in attitudes lay rather between those who had applied to be volunteers and others of similar age and background who had not.

Thus the survey found that twice as many of the former agreed with the statement, "the welfare of the people is a more important

responsibility than the maintenance of law and order." The proportion was the same both before and after the experience of volunteering. More than a quarter of those applying to CSV wanted to be social workers (27 per cent), compared with only 8 per cent of their peers. They were also more politically aware, and more likely to support Labour, but the actual experience of volunteering seemed to have had only a marginal effect on their choice of careers or political views.

Conversations with 40 of the earliest CSVs confirm these findings. Comparatively few say that their political views were radically changed by their experience of volunteering although several agree that it confirmed early leanings to the left.

The effect which CSV had on Vernon Coleman, Leamington Spa GP and medical writer, is not altogether untypical: "I think the single most important thing I discovered was that I had more in common with vandals and delinquents than with the so-called pillars of society. I suppose it really turned me into an anarchist and a professional rebel - something for which I have occasionally cursed Alec Dickson."

Dr Dickson's class of 62 are now strung out in an impressive variety of careers. Of the 40 whom I interviewed, just under half have ended up in the caring professions (six social workers, a nurse, an occupational therapist, three clergymen and three doctors). Four are academics, including Professor Tony Atkinson, professor of economics at the London School of Economics and author of *Unequal Shares*. There are two housewives, three chief inspectors, an AA patrolman, a merchant banker, a solicitor, marketing manager, a plant instrument engineer with British Nuclear Fuels and a satellite communications technician with the RAF.

Rather surprisingly, perhaps, only three of this batch of pioneers have continued to do voluntary work. For the rest, many of whom are of course professionally engaged in helping and looking after people, one sustained stint of "do gooding" seems to have been enough. Yet all without exception are glad that they were CSVs and feel that they got a great deal out of it.



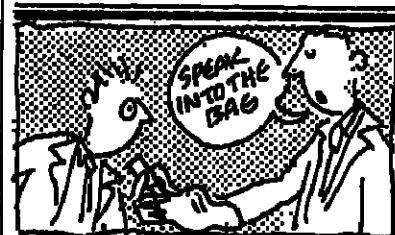
and present, Gawain Davies (standing) at CSV residential unit

lectures at the Spastics Society Training College.

TALKBACK

Oral exams

PETER KING



I share Melvyn Elphes's disquiet concerning assessment of oral English ("English as she is examined", TES, July 22), especially its effect on the final grade where it is not separately assessed. In addition, in our response to the national questionnaire on 16-plus, we expressed our particular concern at the amount of time that would be required for the oral assessment of our current annual 170 O level candidates, in addition to approximately 120 CSE candidates for whom it is a compulsory examination element.

In practical terms, for the best part of a week, six English specialists would need to be engaged virtually full-time on such work, two of them on vital cross-moderation to establish and maintain standards. I have seen little sensible response to such practical considerations, but am prepared to forego that since I subscribe wholeheartedly to the need to assess oral English.

Where I am unhappy is in the nature of the assessment, with the majority of candidates opting for a short talk and/or a reading. If, as Dr Elphes states, "the oral element of English is overwhelmingly and undeniably its most important component" because spoken rather than written English will predominate in our pupils' future lives, couldn't we examine it in a more satisfactory way?

Talks and readings have considerable virtues (one of which, I suspect, is that they are easier to test than many other types of spoken English) but with the majority of pupils they will be no more a feature of their workaday lives than creative writing or the study of literature. I would like to see certain types of writing or literary studies, especially as there is a danger in overrelying on oral English on the grounds that it is the only practical skill of the future.

As English teachers we seem to have made little impact on the prejudices, the stereotyped thinking, the cliché-ridden language of the popular press and too much television. Through reading, writing and talk, however, there may be opportunities to encourage fresh, unbiased, considered opinions on a whole variety of important issues.

Training should be provided in presenting the case for or against, in acting as chairman where a summing up is required, or as a secretary who records the proceedings. We could devise oral assessments where we provide a certain amount of information or instructions, as is customary for many written exercises, to stimulate discussion but at the same time introduce necessary structures or controls for the assessors.

Interviews, using the telephone, giving directions, receiving instructions, using a variety of registers at work or in social situations, buying something after discussion and so on. Aren't these the practical approaches that employers are telling us that they want from school-leavers? They could be practised and assessed by a combination of continuous assessment and final examination.

Possibly there is a stronger case for a spoken English profile than for any other form of English, something of genuine practical value and reliability, provided, as Melvyn Elphes so rightly suggests, "it is a separate oral assessment".

Peter King is director of English studies at The George Ward School, Melksham Wiltshire.

Primary specialists

CHARLES FRISBY

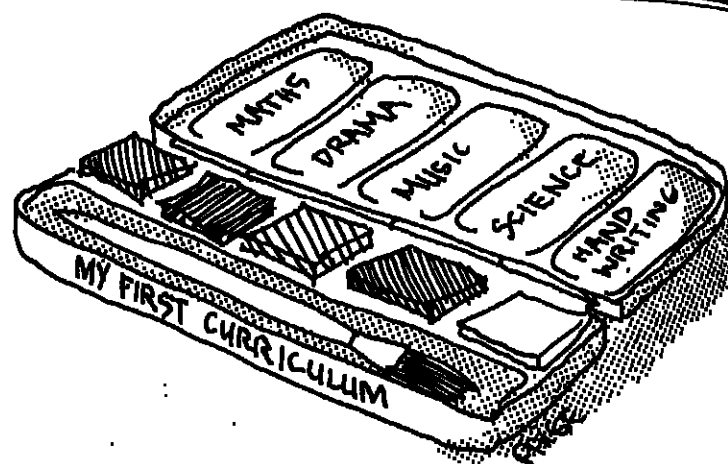
One of the more interesting problems of curriculum management in primary schools is to try to arrange for all children in a school at some time, to have equal access to a varied curriculum. This principle has always been accepted in the "basic" areas. We do not deny access to mathematics or English, art or PE, but it has to be admitted that much of the application of the curriculum in some other areas tends to be a bit haphazard. If some children happen to land with a teacher who is extraordinarily gifted in the teaching of science for example, then those children will have a ball in science for a year, while children of the same age in the class next door get no science at all.

An answer may be found in some degree of specialization of course, and many schools do this. But specialization in one curriculum area alone can cause problems. I remember when I taught music to several classes in a school. The teachers whose classes I was taking generally took mine for reading, or some other quiet activity.

So while I was knocking myself out getting other teachers' children to hit their bongos at the right time, my children, I often felt, were being gently minded. Many of them went on to become the best silent readers in the history of the school, but others simply fell asleep.

Since September 1982 the third and fourth-year children in this school have been vertically grouped into five classes. One of the reasons which led us to favour this arrangement was that with five classes, five teachers and five working days in the week, there might be some interesting timetable permutations we could work. One of these was to have all five teachers swap with each other so that all the classes had every teacher every week.

The curriculum areas which the teachers decided upon for specialist teaching were music, drama, science skills, maths skills and handwriting, and each teacher designed a program



me in his or her area of speciality so that all the others would know exactly what was being done. We decided upon science and maths skills, rather than science or maths because we wanted schemes which could be applied in a systematic way in periods of about 40 minutes and where the content could be clearly defined. A series of lessons in fact.

Science skills then began by setting out quite explicitly what the skills were. So children were directly taught to observe and record things accurately, to use lenses and microscopes and thermometers; to communicate and display results; to ask appropriate questions; to discuss possible reasons and suggest experiments which they could try in their own class science time.

In the maths skills lessons we wanted to ensure that all children had practice in the uses of various measuring instruments; protractor, theodolite, callipers, spring balances and micrometers, and that they were all introduced to new areas like logic and programming.

The experiment is producing some interesting results. We are finding for example that children are beginning to realize what "science" is all about. They are ceasing to see science as a "subject" and more and more coming to regard it as a way of doing things. There is some evidence too that some skills are being seen to be relevant outside the context in which they were learned. Because all the children had early experience with logic games, they recognized the ex-

cise of their skill in classifying materials in science. Because they see the importance of rhythm in music lessons they more easily adapt to the concentration of "mirroring" exercises in drama. Some of the time spent doing handwriting is devoted to editing and re-drafting science and maths reports.

There are other advantages of course. Most children like the idea of meeting the other teachers once a week and of enjoying their different techniques and personalities. The teachers themselves get to know all the children so that in discussing progress or problems we have the benefit of five opinions, not just one. The teachers get immediate feedback from their lessons with one class as they can apply what they learn to the next. Hence the teaching technique improves.

So what started out as a set of lessons in five different curriculum areas, taught by specialists for the learning of distinct skills, is becoming in fact a valuable contribution to a rounded, balanced education.

The real key to the success of the scheme came when we asked children what they thought of the swap round. They liked it, because "we know what we've learned".

Perhaps too many of our children fail at school because they are new quite sure what it is they are supposed to succeed at, and because they have no idea when, and to what degree they are successful.

Charles Frisby is Head at Manor Park Junior School, Coventry.

Independent inspections

MIKE ARKINSTALL

The number of local inspectors has been on the increase in the last 10 years. One authority has actually increased the size of its inspectorate by nearly 300 per cent.

More inspectors might be expected to result in more school visits, but, surprisingly, my research has indicated the opposite. Many teachers claimed that they hardly ever saw their inspector, and certainly not on a one-to-one counselling basis. Inspectors, it was suggested, spent most of their visit in the head's study and were out of

touch with the realities of school life.

In their defence, inspectors complained about the upsurge of paperwork, meetings and policy-making sessions which conspired to keep them out of the classroom.

Teachers, on the whole, were ignorant of the diverse role of the local inspector and largely unsympathetic to their professed work. There was a feeling that the inspectors were not capable of survival in the classroom, and this started a "credibility" gap.

Teachers expected their inspector to be active in professional development and staff counselling; to be knowledgeable about child development, pedagogy and curriculum, and supportive in terms of promotion. Most commented that the inspectors did not measure up to this.

They were sometimes regarded as square pegs in round holes since they were called upon to advise on

subjects and issues about which they had little training, knowledge or experience. This criticism was particularly marked in the case of primary schools when their own inspectors was a subject specialist with a background in a particular discipline and had not taught primary-aged children.

Inspectors countered these suggestions of incompetence by saying they had developed a form of judgement which did not depend upon active and practical experience or involvement.

Inspectors are increasingly involved in policy-making, and many teachers were of the opinion that inspectors were committed to the administrative arm rather than to work in the classroom.

Mike Arkinstall is head of Timbury Primary School, Birmingham. His survey was carried out as part of his research for a higher degree.

Rubbish race

JEAN FLOWER

In the Great Rubbish Race at Kingsfield School, first-formers staggered around for eight weeks under heavy sacks, looking furiously over their shoulders at each other. From behind closed doors came the sound of tearing and smashing and hammering as the sorting and demolition teams swung into action, hammer, giant magnet, claw and Dr Martins at the ready.

Aluminium cans here; others over there. Phew, what a pong. Form 1M were winning, with a total of 687 drink cans, 2,187 crisp packets

and 2,430 ring pulls - a clear lead of 2,538 over the nearest runners-up. However, a delegation from 1P marched complacently in with no fewer than 5,184 ring pulls in two battered shopping bags.

The place is looking considerably tidier. Pupils even had to be restrained from crawling under the temporary buildings in search of ancient and unsavoury garbage. A sack load of crisp bags sent to the crisp company while the special offer was on will raise £1 for every 50 bags; aluminium cans 40p a kg for recycling; ring pulls go to the local hospital kidney unit. We got quite a lot of fun from the competition - so much so that we have more planned, culminating in a public exhibition at the civic centre; posters (about litter); collages (from litter); sculpture (from litter); and poems (about litter).

Jean Flower teaches English at Kingsfield School, Bristol.



REVIEW

A cap in another arena

Edward Blishen on "a naturally competitive boy"

A Yorkshire Boyhood. By Roy Hattersley. Chatto & Windus £8.95. 0 7011 2613 2.

It's distinctly awkward - Mr Hattersley having flung his cap into the other arena, too. Imagine giving your attention to any author as comically perceptive as this, as well worth reading, and not being able to forget that he's a candidate for high office. Wouldn't the groundlings at the first performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have been confused in their pleasure if they'd known that Shakespeare was running against Bacon for the Lord Chancellorship? (Not that one's encouraged to mention Shakespeare in this context. Among the failings to which Mr Hattersley confesses with a candour that is always enjoyably phrased is a belief that Bottom is unamusing.)

Best, perhaps, to get the politician out of the way at once, and to say that yes, the book throws an interesting light on him and the origins of his sense of vocation. He was "a naturally competitive boy", drawn in his teens, in a positively sensuous fashion, to the fal-de-lals of political conflict. "It has been love at first sight - not with Rosemary Ems but with the irresistible canvass-cards and the marked-up registers that could not be denied." "My real passion was for the practice - not the theory - of politics." Once it had been football - which had caused young Hattersley to avoid smoking: "I kept myself pure for Sheffield Wednesday." Competition - that's it. He recalls Saturday afternoons spent with his father from the age of three onwards at the Wednesday ground: "The cries of hope and grief, curling up from under the stands like heat out of an oven, were the most exciting sounds I ever heard." Though I suspect that if you back Mr Hattersley against a wall he'd admit that the sounds of any election night were as thrilling: the surrational of voting papers, the nervous cough of the returning officer.

Thirty years on he will have made himself more attentive to theory: but what this attractive memoir reveals is a fair for conflict sparked off by the sheer furniture of competition. Playing cricket as a schoolboy, for example, he took care to equip himself with his own pads. The absolutely nice thing about Mr Hattersley is that he appreciates the comedy of his own character. "Owning pads was wonderful when I scored twenty or more runs. When I was out for a duck, they simply heightened the humiliation."

His father was a Catholic priest who abandoned his apparent vocation in favour of a better: that of husband to Ernest Brackenbury's daughter, Enid. "Brack" was an old-style Labour Party stalwart; and Enid, a future Lord Mayor of Sheffield, was, on the top of much else, quite beautiful. It's another nice thing about Mr Hattersley that he takes these dramas (distinctly Shakespearean) in his stride. He characterizes his father with quiet exactness, as a man "engulfed in sublime contentment" since the moment of his marriage. He had no interest in any success other than the constant achievement of being married to Enid. And in his father's eyes, Roy "enjoyed the inestimable privilege of being his wife's son". As for Enid, teachers will have all the taste of her quality they need if told that, summoned to the grammar school to discuss the possibility of Roy's expulsion, she deftly transformed the occasion into a discussion of his weakness in French.

Roy Hattersley on the brink of expulsion? It was a mistake: a remote consequence of his being taken, in a household otherwise adult,



With mother and, right, with father.

to be frail. It's another oddity he takes in his comic stride, that his father had two brothers (as drawn to holiness as he had been, and then as withdrawn from it. They all lived together, with Roy's Brackenbury grandmother. "I was the only child in the life of two generations of adults." He had no sensation, such as even his mother expected him to have, of being spoilt; but recognizes that, especially as an asthmatic, he was protected against all imaginable germs. Oddly, in a basically radical family, this meant that he was sent in the first place to a private school, where his delicate chest "would be treated with the kind of respect prohibited in 'State schools'". The end result was that he was a second-chancer at the grammar school. The bright ambitious boy found himself hanging on to the very tip of the bough. The unsuitability of that went deep: there's a striking account of a moment when, against the rules, he opened his report to find that excellent marks were accompa-

nied by parous comments: he attempted at once to storm into the presence of the headmaster. My new respect for him as a political animal is based on this event: because of his refusal to be meekly put down, and because he has such an undeciphered understanding of the steps that were taken to disarm him.

The possibility (which even without Enid's intervention was clearly the impossibility) of his expulsion arose from his being an adolescent. He is good on this phase when "manliness is easily confused with uncouth brutality". He is good, too - sharp and witty - on many aspects of lower middle-class life, c1940. He gives a splendid account of the energy that was devoted, in a new estate, to concealing the details of one's life from neighbours whose own lives, in every particular, were perfectly similar. He writes memorably about a section of his family he sums up, on geographical grounds, as "Workshop": puritanical, they deprived even his mother of her habit of command, and from time to time he frankly wished them dead. I suspect that many English families have a "Workshop" somewhere in the background: some have one in the foreground; and Mr Hattersley's account of this phenomenon deserves a place in the annals.

He writes well, too, on the extraordinary fashion in which, c1950, an ambitious family might fail to get their favourite son to university, for sheer ineptitude on the part of everyone concerned, including the staff of the grammar school he attended. As any decent person ought to be, he is occasionally self-contradictory: as when he says of the family dream that he should become an undergraduate that it was "the most destructive dream of all - the one in which, somehow, everything always turned out right in the end". This being closely followed by his account of a beloved, ridiculous dog, who had "the quality in life which I admired the most. She was incurably hopeful".

It's a funny, evocative book, in which even a tram is precisely characterized. (I remember trams, and can vouch for Mr Hattersley's intimate portrait of one.) I think, to return to my original embarrassment, that, to anyone who opposes Mr Hattersley's public ambitions, one has to say that... if he succeeded, he'd produce in the end the only Prime Ministerial memoirs that were not only readable, but positively funny. For I cannot believe that anyone in whom a shrewd sense of comedy is so firmly rooted, together with the gift of finding words for it, could fail to bring it to bear on the bizarre domestic scenes (merely larger than those that concern him in this book) offered by government and parliament.

Out goes fuddy-duddy...

By Peter Mullen

the metaphysics of sexual mores. Take *Pat-a-cake*. Latent meaning and depth grammar reveal it as a text on the *Electra* Complex. It's her father, of course, whom she is asking *bake me a cake*... put in the oven for baby. The whole text becomes, as incantation, a transcendental symbol for the justification of father-daughter incest: *pat it and prick it, she asks*. "Legitimized incest can be found in such as, *ahem, Cock-a-doodle-do* which foregrounds the male organs in the structural metaphors *fiddling sticks* and *shoes*."

Zeugma frowned. "Though even here we find metaphors of domination: *Master and stick*. Whether the fact that the *master* has *lost his fiddling stick* refers to sexual or societal impotence is an open question." Ms Vagus brightened, "I see the statement that the *master didn't know what to do* as an indication of the powerlessness of the ruling class in the immediate pre-revolutionary situation."

We ordered three more drinks. "Masturbation", ejaculated Zeugma. I was startled. I said "Cheers!" "Diddle-diddle dumpling", he continued. "Speaks for itself. Now, why does he go to bed with his trousers on? Because the sudden arrival of his mother has surprised him and he still has one shoe off and the other shoe on."

Sapphina rubbed the glocker on her plaid necktie. "The ultimate aim is the *Wierless Text*. Abolish the Intentionalist Fallacy."

stared at me through his glass darkly. "Wee Willie Winkle", he said "the Humbert Humbert archetype of the Collective Unconscious: *Are the children all in bed?*"

"Take Little Tommy Tittlemouse", said Sapphina and at once a violent argument broke out between them. "The *little house* is obviously a metonym for lack of comfort at home, unresponsive wife, etc. So the rhyme becomes a metaphor of adultery since he has to *catch his fishes in other men's ditches*."

"Not so!" shouted Zeugma and I thought he would swallow his huge cigar. "The fish is undoubtedly the male organ while other men's ditches synecdochally represents homosexual colitis. Besides, there is the secondary significance *fishes forces which he caught*. The whole text thus acts as a warning about the danger of disease in the disapproved liaisons."

"Explain then," she said hotly, "why in the ur-text *Georgie Porgie* there is no such taboo. Clearly the second line is a metaphor of penetration pronounced as *pudding* and *pie* from *putting in pie* in a primitive source now lost. And the sado-masochistic gratification *kissed the girls and made them cry* turned into group sodomy when the boys came out to play."

"Can you really derive all this from children's rhymes?"

The scornful look again. "Of course. Even

old-fashioned *Formgeschichte* would tell you that. The historical context alters the originally explicit sexual semiology and in so doing often produces infelicitous rhymes as a *Little Tommy Tucker* sings for his supper... when clearly it used to read -

"Precisely", hummed Sapphina, "the same sort of censorship appears in *Margery Daw*. *Daw-door, get it? See-saw, up and down*. The whole thing is a compilation metaphor. *Johnny (I) shall have but a penny a day because he can't - now you're not going to tell me the original was WORK any faster!*"

Zeugma stubbed the cigar. "Then there's the semiotic allegorization of *sex* as *creation myth* in *Jack Horner's corner*. *When he pulls out a plum*, that is fertilization-fruitful. The *Christmas pie* is obviously a reference to *divine incarnation*, while *what a good boy apple* is a cross-cultural duplication of the *Genesis* motif *And God saw that it was good*."

They began to chatter faster so that I thought of them as Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee. At last I hit on a way to quieten them: "I get the idea. *Hey diddle diddle* - obviously an encoded metaphor for cheats and charlatans, supported by the cat and the fiddle where, clearly, the cat is a symbol of university wisdom while the fiddle represents an interested party's retranscription of *on the fiddle*. The *link dogs* who *leaped to see each other* are the Eng Lit dons who are hoodwinking students into accepting Deconstructivist Criticism. Only one day somebody will see through it all. The nutty teachers will be *dished* - or as the rhyme-text has it, they will find that their silver spoon has run away."

ARTS

Junky props and pyrotechnics

Major Road Theatre Company celebrate their tenth anniversary this year. Nick Baker reports on their latest projects

Tuesday August 2, Mite Park Pavilion, Maidstone. Over 50 11 to 14-year-olds huddle together in groups. Their task is to invent playlets which answer questions like "What is thunder?" and "Where do hills come from?" The kids dig enthusiastically into the baskets of junky props and costumes, aided by the four actor-leaders from Major Road. This is Major Road's fourth summer visit to Maidstone, where their following is well established and keen, so much so that this year they have been able to recruit older "helpers", 16 and 17-year-old graduates from past projects. The afternoon is a resounding success. There seems to be an instinctive understanding among the young performers that there is a sinister edge to folk myth and fairy story. During the playlets' rehearsal the thunderstorm that has been threatening all day finally materializes and is greeted with delight. At the end of the afternoon session, Al Dix, the leader of the project, explains that the show they will be working towards will be about nasty fairy tales. It will open at the Hazlitt Theatre in Maidstone on the following Friday.

Monday August 8, Fort Gardens, Gravesend. The other half of the Major Road team is working with

around 40 older teenagers on a much larger, more ambitious piece, involving giant puppets, lighting effects and pyrotechnics as well as drama and music. The theme is the teenagers' view of their future - their ambitions and their fears. Although they have only five days left before their performance, the atmosphere is relaxed and comfortable, deliberately un-school-like. In glorious sunshine, one group rehearses with percussion, another practices a movement routine while a third puts the finishing touches to a publicity banner. Fort Gardens is a wartime riverside gun emplacement converted into a small park. The only cover is a bandstand and a marquee. Major Road members take it in turns to camp there to guard the equipment. Because the space is a public park, a small impromptu audience forms and looks on, fascinated. At the end of the afternoon, Graham Downs, the pyrotechnics man, gives a dazzling demonstration of the dramatic effect of fireworks.

Oxford graduate Graham Devlin formed Major Road in 1973. With the intention, like many other touring groups of the time, of "taking theatre to places where people would otherwise have little opportunity to see it". Seeking a predominantly young audi-

ence, he commissions plays from writers like Howard Barker and C. P. Taylor, often giving them a specific brief. Now he hopes that the ideas generated by the youth projects like those in Gravesend and Maidstone (funded, incidentally, by South East Arts and local authorities) can be channelled back into the more straightforward performance work. 9pm, Friday August 12, Fort Gardens in Gravesend now bristles with policemen and firemen as the 1,000-strong audience follow the winding hill-path where tableaux vivants and sculpture, eerily lit by petrol torches, give a depressing picture of the future for young people. The performance itself is magnificent. The playing area (virtually the whole park) is too big for straight drama, so the group uses choral speaking and choreographed music, punctuated by lighting and pyrotechnics to a backing of synthesizer music. The story vaguely resembles Pink Floyd's *The Wall* in an allegorical battle between the free-spirited young and the authoritarian old, the young naturally triumphing with a spectacular and noisy firework display and the burning of the set (curiously resembling a sort of expressionist House of Commons) and those grotesque giant puppets.

Saturday August 13, Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone. Meanwhile, the Maidstone project has come up with something more traditionally theatrical, working their original folk-myths into *The Beggar's Tale*. The stage is full of seemingly medieval beggars (the happiest looking I have ever seen) who use the occasion of the death of their leader to cheer themselves up by recounting stories with such marvellously Brechtian titles as "The Beggar Mother's Journey Through Fear". The folk-tale explanations of the seasons, the formation of lakes and more outrageous, culminating in a cautionary tale about the future, complete with terraced houses and noisy television-watching neighbours.

Major Road's second Maidstone project for 14 to 20-year-olds will be performed at the Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone on August 26 and 27. It's *Leeds project takes place at the Ralph Thoresby Community Theatre, Holt Park Estate, between September 5 and 17. Bye Bye Love, a new show about teenage romance, will be touring between October and December. For details ring Bradford (0274) 480251.*

Successful airlift

Radio is the medium by which the vast majority of new plays are produced each year: 500 from the BBC alone. They cost a tiny fraction of the sums involved in television drama, and their authors can consequently afford to be much more adventurous. Each year Methuen publish the winning scripts of the BBC Giles Cooper Awards: Best Radio Plays of 1982 (£7.95), introduced by Richard Ineson, contains six scripts, five of which are worth anyone's time to read. The mercurial talents of Rhys Adrian are pressed interestingly into service with "Watching the Plays Together", a Chinese-box extravaganza; Harry Barton's "Loupoc Day" is deftly whimsical; Donald Chapman's "Invisible Writing" is a sadly memorable epistolary experiment; William Trevor's "Autumn Sunshine" is a haunting little episode, perfectly realized; Tom Stoppard's "The Dog Who Was That Died" has already been praised to the skies in these columns. Only John Arden's legend, "The Old Man Sleeps Alone", medievalism with a portentous modern slant, fails on the page as one suspects it must have done over the air.

Michael Church

An unsuspected paradise

The Lake District Discovered 1810-1850: The Artists, the Tourists and Wordsworth. Grasmere and Wordsworth Museum until October 31.

Journey to the Lake District from Cambridge. A summer diary 1779. By William Wilberforce. Oriel Press £6.95. 85362 204 3.

Artists, especially watercolourists, flocked to the Lakes during the Napoleonic wars when Continental scenery was inaccessible and, as this exhibition demonstrates, Lakeland scenes were commercial. This year's show, organized by Robert Woolf, Reader in English at the University of Newcastle, and Peter Bicknell, a former Fellow of Downing College, Cambridge, follows on from last year's. "The discovery of the Lake District 1750-1810: a Context for Wordsworth."

The pictures are in the Grasmere and Wordsworth Museum, a converted coach house next to Dove Cottage, where Wordsworth wrote some of his most famous poems, entertained Coleridge, and laid the stone steps in the steep garden himself. Dove Cottage has been restored and is given context by the permanent exhibition next door, which relates the poet's life to his work. A visit to Rydal Mount, Wordsworth's last home a few miles away, completes the tour.

Although big names (Turner, Peter de Wint, Constable) are represented in the current exhibition, it is by minor works. There is a whole wall of wonderful drawings by the fine artist Edward Lear, better known as the writer of limericks. My favourite is "Crummock", the catalogue says it is "pencil and chalk", the label "conté", but no matter: the catalogue is marvellous value at £2.

The commercial success of John Glover (1767-1849), twice President of the Society for Painters in Watercolours, aroused the jealousy of Constable, who mocked him as "the English Claude". Glover's work has a stylized charm, an artificiality in composition so that all curves are sweeping and exaggerated, which accounts for his popularity. The exhibition offers varied pleasures: the painting by Jane Nasmith of Langdale Pikes, though accomplished, also uses all the period's clichés, including improbably feathery trees and a central stretch of water framed by a foreground with a dip

in its middle. She worked in oils, while other artists were producing soft ground etchings, lithographs, steel engravings and aquatints, which opened up the watercolour market.

The work of the Thomas Miles Richardson, father and son, is historically interesting. Richardson senior was said to have been "a watercolourist, even in oils, prepossessed with transparency and preservation of ground which are the treasures of the one art and the poverty of the other". Luminosity is what strikes the viewer in his oil of the Old Mill, Ambleside (on loan from the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne). His son's watercolour of Ullswater (where the young Wordsworth stole the boat) not only gave him admission to the Society of Painters in Watercolour, but was the most frequently reproduced Lakeland picture.

The work of Robert Hills (1769-1844), founder member of the Society of Watercolour, Skelwith Force, is outstanding, handling rocky masses boldly and beautifully. William James Blacklock's oil, "Cattle and Cattle Pike" was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1854. His mountains are magnificently sculptural. Here was the birth of an idiom which was to become familiar in a later variant of travel romanticism: the twentieth century railway poster. The exhibition also includes aquatints by William Westall, illustrations of Wordsworth's poems, together with letters.

Wordsworth is sometimes credited with "inventing" the Lake District and then opposing the railways for fear the visitors would trample the daffodils. In fact, admiration for the "English Switzerland" was well established by the last quarter of the eighteenth century, although 1850 it had been considered a "desert", bleak and uninhabited. The shift in taste towards spectacular scenery, nourished by the Grand Tour and connoisseurship in painting, happened quickly. The writings of Thomas Gray accelerated the process: his description of Grasmere as "unsuspected paradise" influenced Wordsworth's choice of dwelling place, and his description of Gordale Scar inspired James Ward to paint it.

Wordsworth was only nine when William Wilberforce, during his last long vacation at Cambridge, set out for the Lakes, keeping a conscientious

travel diary. On horseback and by chaise, the journey took him six weeks. Following the same route, one does the 250 miles in a day by car.

Wilberforce is not a gifted nor an original observer: the interest lies more in what he sees than in his way of seeing. Following Burke, he divides scenery into the "sublime" (large) and the "beautiful" (small), a distinction maintained by Wordsworth later when he wrote that his soul had been "Fostered alike by beauty and by fear". Wilberforce dutifully kept leaving the main road to look at the spectacular Yorkshire waterfalls, although, as he regretfully noted, in summer time there is not much water falling. The scenery between Masham and Hawes is much as he saw it: dry stone walls, the receding perspective of glacial escarpments, one behind the other into the blue distance. Here his eye for beauty fails him: he merely observes, with the eighteenth-century gentleman's eye to the economy, that "the wastes... are not utterly useless since sheep are fed to the very Tops of the Mountains". He got out of his chaise to look at Jervaulx Abbey, now in better condition than when he saw it. Unfortunately today it is necessary to ask visitors not to pick the wild flowers, blue mallow, yellow ragwort and knapweed, which grow luxuriantly among the old stones. Bottom castle, too, was in ruins: it is now a restaurant.

At Askrigg he noted that "the manufacture is entirely that of knit stockings, mittens, etc. Old and young work at it alike... One sees the Milk Maids knitting as they go and come back from the cow...". In the Wordsworth Museums are wooden knitting sticks, which women hung from their waists. Each stick had a hole to hold one needle rigid, so the woman could knit with her right hand and cook with her left.

Wilberforce went to see Hardrow Scar, the highest unbroken fall in Great Britain, a drop of 100 feet, later described by Wordsworth and painted by Turner. "In the Great Frost, 1739, the Water froze as fast as it came down till it made an immense column of ice 35 yards high and 76 round." The waterfall froze again in 1963. Today you have to pay 10 pence to see it.

Valerie Grosvenor Myer

BOOKS

A dubious Eden

The Galapagos Affair. By John Treherne. Cape £8.95.

Fact, as the old cliché goes, is stranger than fiction, and a bizarre tale given the backing of truth takes far greater hold of the reader's imagination than any purely fictional work. Dr John Treherne, a zoologist and academic at Cambridge University, writes in the comfortable, slightly dry style that one would expect from a don, and his methodical chronicling of the extraordinary events that took place on the Galapagos Island of Floreana in the 1980s bestows on them a gravitas that a more imaginative writer might not have achieved.

Friedrich Ritter, a German doctor with a philosophical bent, and his girlfriend Dore Strauch, left Berlin in July 1929 with the intention of establishing an earthly paradise on Floreana. They arrived at their chosen destination almost two months later to find it indeed beautiful, but arduous to an unforeseen degree.

Though Ritter rated his own intellect very high and bullied Dore into sharing this view, neither of them was nearly as personally interesting as they imagined. What is fascinating is that not only did they embark on this adventure at a time when such an enterprise would have been very unconventional, but that they also remained and survived in conditions that could hardly have been less luxurious. Nothing about Treherne's description of life on Floreana makes one long to leap on a banana boat and turn one's back on civilization. The land was cruel and unyielding. Friedrich and Dore were plagued by illness; insects; drought; a "satanic" boar which destroyed their carefully-cultivated crops - in fact just what one would expect from a desert island.

They had apparently already been lovers for two years in Berlin, but the stresses and strains of the idyllic life placed an inevitable burden on the relationship. Friedrich was bored by Dore and abused her, both mentally and physically. She, on the other hand, seems to have been a gushing hausfrau who managed to convince herself that they were indeed the Adam and Eve of this very

dubious Eden.

Matters were not improved by the arrival of other would-be Robinson Crusoes in the shape of, first, the thoroughly decent Wittmer family who were to be responsible for the island's first native, baby Rolf. They were followed by the "Baroness", Whip-cracking, revolver-brandishing, she terrorized not only the other Floreana settlers, but also her own retinue of gigolos, with whom she apparently slept in rotation.

The most curious and amusing thing about *The Galapagos Affair* is what it reveals about human nature, or, to be more precise, how it reinforces what we already know. Despite the exotic setting, the lack of comfort and facilities, the immense yawning differences between life on a desert island and life in Germany, the preoccupations and irritations remain those of any giggling bourgeois seeking to ingratiate and advance himself in the eyes of his neighbours. How sad to reflect that even on Floreana, keeping up with the Joneses was a major consideration. At one point, Dore consoles herself for her domestic inefficiency by reminding herself of the remark made by a visitor to the island: "The Wittmers' house is very nice, but at Ritter's you can talk". Petty rivalry abounds, and while this may be Eden, long before the mysterious occurrences that Treherne is seeking to unravel take place, a serpent is running riot.

Treherne has done his homework and he is successful both in bringing the characters alive and in giving a vivid picture of their life and tensions. Where he fails completely is in providing a solution to the mysterious events that bring the supposed idyll to an end. That may always have been an impossibility, and I doubt that even Sherlock Holmes could have solved this case, but in that Treherne rather leads the reader on, it is frustrating to have the book end with such excuses as "Well, no one really knows what happened and it's been a great mystery ever since". Were this fiction, our curiosity could, of course, have been satisfied. Would he, on the other hand, have come up with such an excellent yarn?

Lucretia Stewart

Savour at leisure

Old Calabria. By Norman Douglas. Century Publishing £4.95. 0 7126 0113 9.

Siren Land. By Norman Douglas. Penguin £2.50. 0 14 00 9511 X. A Traveller in Southern Italy. 0 413 52210 5. A Stranger in Spain. 52200 8. By H. V. Morton. Methuen £5.95 each.

Goethe wrote of a work of Herder's that "people take it... as food, when in reality it is the dish. He who has nothing to put into it will find it empty". Something similar might be said of Travel. There are those people (the majority) for whom what H. V. Morton calls the "scamperings" hither and thither are, qua movement, the "food", given by a certain obligatory exotic colouration by the blur of unaccustomed impressions produced by the conjunction of speed with ignorance. And there are the remaining minority for whom the more stately progression, or movement, is but the dish which a previously prepared stock of knowledge enables them to fill and savour at leisure. Both Douglas and Morton belong to this latter class of travellers. Their writing will naturally appeal to those who either in fact, or potentially, are of the same bent. Scamperers, however, will find even Morton's accounts unsatisfactory (Douglas goes further for their purposes clearly out of date). Failing a guide to take them about and give the needed information, what is obviously wanted is a crisp guide-book giving directions in telegram form with no

digressions, the more so when there is little time to complete a veritable crammer's itinerary.

Old Calabria (1915) and *Siren Land* (1911) ought now to be read largely for their own sakes, rather than for any guidance they can give an intending and enterprising reader. And most amusing and entertaining reading they remain, full of recondite information, improbable stories about saints, martyrs, dragons, sirens, and what not. There is, for instance Douglas's own "far-fetched theory" about dragons which finds their origins (very plausibly) in fountains or sources of water. There is the chapter given to the source of *Paradise Lost* in an obscure work "by a certain Salandra" printed in Cosenza in 1647. *Siren Land* is geographically restricted to the Sorrentine peninsula. But for him who, as Douglas has, has studied its varied aspects, classical, mythological, historical, archaeological, botanical etc, it is a virtually inexhaustible subject. There is, as an opening chapter, an essay on the origins of sirens. There is a mischievous account of the life of Sister Serafina whose activities bear so close an affinity to those of St Teresa of Avila as perhaps to cast some doubt upon their genuineness. There is a reasoned defence of Tiberius against his detractors. No doubt much of this is erudition in disguise, but it is erudition which has no value beyond that merely of being known. But this, for him who is time and outlook (which is not to say for him who is an Autolyous) is an advantage, a prophylactic against



"Ancient Indian philosophy arose and was nurtured in forest hermitages. It recognized that humans must coexist with other beings. Modern science is rediscovering how vital forests are for the continued health of civilization." From *Indira Gandhi's Foreword to Sunlight and Shadows: An Indian Wildlife Photographer's Diary* by M Y Ghorpade (Gollancz £10.95) which makes an "eloquent plea" for conservation.

Bad, but not desperate

Conservation. Edited by Wendy Pettigrew. Teach Yourself Books £2.50. 0 340 26821 2.

The Industrial Revolution and the economic growth that ensued needed all the resources it could get hold of. Nothing was allowed to stand in the way of "progress": hence forests were destroyed, buildings demolished, water and air polluted. Only recently have people developed a concern for the vanishing elements of the world's environment. However, Victorian values so dear to some sectors of society still resist any attempt to

restrict tree enterprise and the struggle for conservation is therefore an uphill one. Yet today's technology endangers the environment to a much greater extent than nineteenth-century industry. A book like Wendy Pettigrew's, which tries to educate people into caring for what we still have left, is therefore more than welcome.

As she states in her introduction "Conservation is a way of life" though the word may have a variety of meanings according to the object of concern: for some people it relates to buildings, for others to hedgerows, energy, birds, or water. She has given ten specialist writers a chapter each: they have produced a

concise review of the current situation and suggested means of improvement. Though some chapters are better than others, they share two characteristics. The first is that they do not try to scare the reader: the situation is bad but it is not desperate. The second, related to the previous one, is that we can and we should do something about it: the contributors give practical advice on where a lay person can start. As the book is intended for young people, the suggestions are simple and inviting. One of the appendices lists careers in conservation, thus implying that rather than increasing unemployment, it can create jobs.

Sebastian Loew

The Reef £3.95. 0 86968 372 9. Roman Fever £3.50. 373 7. By Edith Wharton, with new introductions by Marilyn French. Virago Modern Classics.

Edith Wharton's work is upper-second, not first: excellent water colour lacking vigour to rivet attention long. Her perceptions are fine, as is her prose, allusive sometimes to evanescence - an artistry palling at length. The stories (*Roman Fever*) are consequently more telling. None the less the work is a fascinating record of a now dead world of understatement and reserve. PW

Among this week's contributors:

Edward Blisshen's latest book, *Donkey Work*, is published next week by Hamish Hamilton. Valerie Grosvenor Myer is the author of critical studies of Jane Austen and Margaret Drabble. Peter Mullen is the Vicar of Tockwith & Bilton with Bickerton, Yorkshire.

Endpage 23
David Martin on the history of hymnody; Frances Spalding on Peter Fuller; Hugh David on the Bubble Theatre Company.

Next Week
Timothy O'Keeffe on James Joyce and W B Yeats; Lynne Truss interviews playwright Christopher Hampton.

Pierre Watter

BOOKS

Lone wolf

The Sacred Threshold: A Life of Rainer Maria Rilke. By J F Hendry. Carcanet New Press £9.95, 85635 3698.

"He carried his solitude around like a treasure in that gloriously strange world." After an unhappy and confused childhood - brought up as a girl by his mother and as a little soldier by his father - Rainer Maria Rilke ensured that he was rarely alone in adult life, eagerly seeking out benefactors and aristocratic sponsors in the glorious strangeness of post-First World War Europe.

In his new biography of the German-Czech poet, J F Hendry shows how deeply Rilke was affected by the heavy intellectual atmosphere of Berlin, the "great firework" of Viareggio, the powerful spirit of Russia and the openness of Paris. His influential benefactor, Princess Marie von Thurn und Taxis provided him with hospitality across the continent and the security he required to fulfil his artistic ambitions. Rilke, though he invited it, often felt stifled by the benevolence of his female admirers. Even marriage to Rodin's pupil Clara Westhoff could not serve to overcome either his fear of solitude or his desperate

need for privacy. Even at the height of his long, reassuring correspondence with the Princess, Rilke could describe his loneliness as the "true elixir", he rejected the fashionable psychoanalysis of another friend, the Freudian Lou Andreas-Salomé, fearing that analysis would leave him with "something perilously close to a disinfected soul". As a poet, he hugged close his fears; always anxious to link art and life, he feared any clinical soul-searching.

Ironically, it was to Switzerland that he retreated at the end of his life, having once been intimidated by the landscape and the clinical detachment of the Swiss. Yet, again, it was security Rilke needed to finish his elusive *Elegies*, his most important work, begun at Princess Marie's house in Duino.

Under the influence of Rodin, Rilke had taught himself to see clearly and to translate the seen world into poetry. J F Hendry's biography presents an uncomplicated and fascinating account of that process, explaining the thought and experience behind the poet's work without uncovering every last intricacy of Rilke's life.

Eleanor Caldwell

Chills and thrills

Bertolt Brecht Short Stories 1921-1946. Edited by John Willett and Ralph Manheim. Methuen £8.95, 0 413 37050 X.

Casual wickedness, moral hypocrisy, determined self-interest - such are the familiar residents of Brecht's milieu. They appear in the 37 pieces which, together with a fragment of what was intended as a short book, comprise this complete collection of his known finished short stories.

Separated into three groups corresponding to time spent in Bavaria (1920-1924), Berlin (1924-1933) and in exile (1933-1946), these stories are not solely the product of artistic self-expression but ironically often the outpourings of simple commercialism. Nevertheless, they occa-

sionally exhibit the fastidiousness one expects from a man who had himself buried in a zinc coffin in order to protect himself from worms.

In "The Monster", for example, the evil subject of a film is portrayed better by an actor than by the real villain; or in "Bad Water", a tale replete with Brechtian irony, the narrator arrives on an island during a funeral which "enabled me to meet a lot of people all at once and save a good deal of time". Funereal, grotesque, dismissive of hope or sentiment and with an utterly cold and frightening view of the world, the stories are relieved, at times, by their peculiar imagery and a certain chilling perfection.

Brandon Russell

Living English

R A Banks

For the student working in the further education setting or individually at home, this book provides a sound preparation for the English language element in examinations such as CSE, GCE, 16+, or for certificates in technical, commercial or business studies. The major problem areas of punctuation, spelling, grammar, vocabulary, notions of correctness, and differences between written and spoken English are covered. In addition, there are clear sections on composition, letter-writing, reports, summary and precis, summary and directed writing, comprehension, multiple-choice tests, figurative language, and common errors and confusions. Each section is followed by a series of lively and varied exercises to which a key is provided wherever appropriate.

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Bonaparte, in oriental costume, with the Pasha of Cairo. "When I am in France," he is said to have declared, "I am a Christian, when in Egypt a Mohammedan." From Alan Moorehead's classic of historical travel writing, *The Blue Nile*, now published in Penguin (£5.95). This beautifully illustrated companion volume to *The White Nile* follows the river through Ethiopia, the Sudan and Egypt between 1798 and 1869.

Towards identity

Germany: a companion to German studies. Second edition. Edited by Malcolm Pasley. Methuen £9.95, 0 416 33660 4.

Literature and Society in Germany 1918-1945. By Ronald Taylor. Harvester Press £8.95, 0 7108 0492 X.

On the first page of Malcolm Pasley's *Companion*, L P Johnson writes of the "centuries of oscillation" that attended the fixing of Germany's political boundaries. It is a good phrase for its purpose, a good phrase for that country's slow progress towards some kind of cultural identity, and a good phrase to justify what might be thought yet another routine handbook for students.

The core of this second edition of *Germany* remains the historical survey, where three essayists take nearly 300 pages to chart the emergence of "Germany" as a recognizable concept. They treat complex matters with remarkable lucidity, and their work gives bottom to the earlier essays on language and institutions and the later ones on philosophy, literature and music. Through care-

ful choice of contributors, and sensible, balanced editing Dr Pasley provides an introduction to the oscillations of his subject which fosters understanding. This reissue of the book as a solidly bound paperback is very welcome.

Welcome too is the paperback of Ronald Taylor's more narrowly focused study of Germany's cultural crisis after 1918. Professor Taylor (who wrote about medieval literature and music in the Pasley book) admits the problems of trying to get social and artistic affairs into an alignment that does justice to both. The wealth of his reading, however, allows him to move easily over some very rocky territory and he brilliantly balances out not only the tension between "literature" and "society" but also the variable values of literature as personal expression and literature as a response to political or commercial pressures. The way he meshes in references to other phenomena - film, painting, science - also indicates one area where Dr Pasley may find room for expansion when he comes to edit a third edition of *Germany*.

Brian Alderson

Life after death

The Rules of Sociological Method: and selected texts on sociology and its method. By Emile Durkheim. Translated by W D Halls. Edited, with an introduction, by Steven Lukes. Macmillan £15.00 and £4.95.

Durkheim remains best-known to a non-specialist audience for *Suicide*, a gloomy account of a gloomy subject by a constitutionally gloomy man. The strain of getting through it has meant that few people outside professional sociology have more than a sketchy view of the remainder of his work.

Now at last, Steven Lukes has provided a reasonably balanced and comprehensible introduction to Durkheim's work, balancing the long essay on methodology, done in 1895, with a selection of later essays, notes, letters, and the 1908 debate with the historian Charles Seignobos, which, stilted though it is, at least sounds a shade like human discourse.

If *Suicide* made you want to jump off the library roof, this latest addition to Anthony Giddens' forum series "Contemporary Social Theory" will give you hope.

Brian Morton

Private taboos

Franz Kafka's special sense of being an outsider, even in his language, enabled him to compose fables which have continued to acquire resonance as the twentieth century has accelerated the historical process of displacement and dispossession. Now when we speak of a situation being "Kafkaesque" we are usually talking of something which is actually happening, not a surreal fantasy. But what were the origins of this weight of undiscovered guilt which Kafka's characters acquire so mysteriously, and which oppresses them so profoundly? They lie, according to Marthe Robert in her *Franz Kafka's Loneliness* (Faber & Faber £12.50), in Kafka's equivocal relationship to his Jewishness. Kafka's strict dietary beliefs (which amounted to self-starvation) and his revulsion from "the black magic of sex" are, she shows, a sort of neurotic imitation of Jewish law. His private taboos, with their "secret masochism", were sweeping substitutes for the law from which he felt estranged, substitutes which "all originated in an essential principle of Jewish legalism, and all culminated in its reversal, since in this domain doing too much was equivalent to not doing what was necessary, hence to transgressing the law in the very point where he most wanted to remain within it". Robert probes with the delicate skill of a brain surgeon in Kafka's mind, relying heavily on his revealing *Diaries* (edited by Max Brod, Penguin £3.95), which Kafka had requested Brod to burn on his death. They contain, as well as accounts of Kafka's mental state and experiences, unfinished drafts of stories; it is part of the essence of all Kafka's stories that they are in some sense still unfinished drafts. The publication of *Description of a Struggle* and other stories (Penguin £1.95) means that all his stories are now available in Penguin.

Neil Philip

Penguin have also brought out two compendia: *The Penguin Complete Short Stories of Franz Kafka* and *The Penguin Complete Novels of Franz Kafka* at £3.95 and £4.95 respectively.

Root-march

Your Family History, and How to Discover It. By C M Matthews. Lutetworth Press £7.95, 0 7188 2542 X.

Hanibal Jenkyn, Cornish farmer, began *Atlanthus* somewhere near the start of the eighteenth century. Another of Hanibal's descendants, Mrs Matthews, successfully unravelled her ancestors' tangled tale, and here sets herself to help others do the same. Her style is sometimes arch, but her guide (updated from its 1977 version) is rich in sensible practical hints and has some good tales, with much incidental light on social history. We should be thankful for the vast documentation and ordered lives of recent centuries; it may not be so easy a century hence to untangle our own chaotic, computerized generation.

Tom Corte

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BOOKS

Watching the birdie

Bird Watching. By Gareth Thomas. Watts Activity Books £3.50.
The Garden Bird Book. Edited by David Glue. Macmillan £7.95

Watching Birds. By Ian Wallace. **Watching Wildlife.** By Andrew Cooper. Usborne Pocket Naturalist £1.50 each.

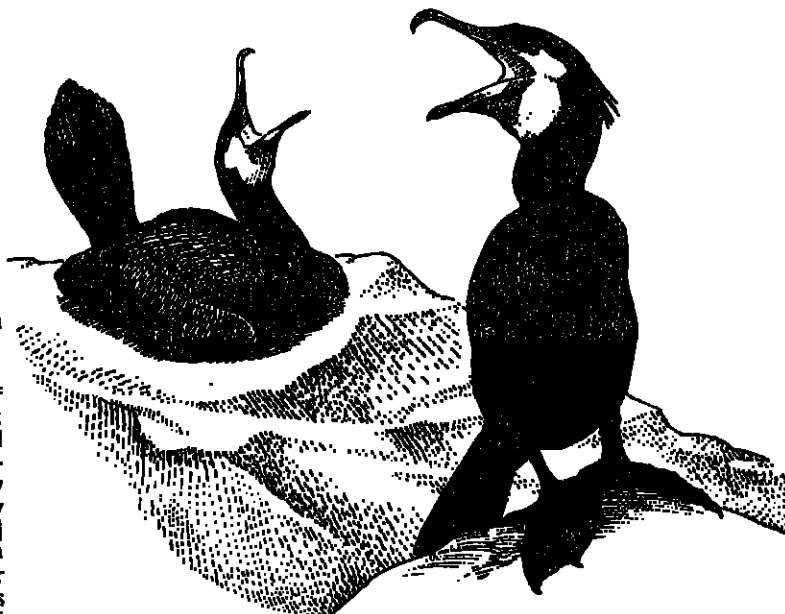
Birds. By Tessa Board. **Watts Insight Books** £4.25.

British Wild Birds. By Brian Grimes. Hodder and Stoughton £9.95

Bird Watching is a robust, compact book whose 80 pages are crammed with information and ideas for children interested in this increasingly popular hobby. (The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds [RSPB] now has more than a third of a million members, and its junior wing, the Young Ornithologists Club, over 100,000.) It caters well for the complete novice, telling you the things you need to know to get started: the equipment you'll need, the naming of birds' parts, and so on.

There are plenty of intelligently presented projects that can be carried out at or close to home, such as counting the birds in flocks or investigating the factors that provoke tits into ripping the foil tops of milk bottles. Some alert children may wonder what the point is of, say, mapping the feeding route taken by a starling walking over a lawn; the book only talks of "learning more" about birds, although in many cases there are good scientific reasons for the exercises.

As we'd expect from an RSPB research biologist, Gareth Thomas properly emphasizes the law, conservation, and personal safety. The book is well illustrated with photos and drawings, and I strongly recommend it for boys and girls aged 7-14.



Courting cormorants - from Eric Simms' detailed study of bird behaviour and evolution, *A Natural History of British Birds*. With excellent line drawings and colour plates by Robin Gillmor, the book includes chapters on plumage, song, migration and gives advice on methods and equipment for observing. (Dent £12.95)

Lucky the youngsters whose mums and dads own *The Garden Bird Book*. Compiled by the British Trust for Ornithology, this book tells you how to attract birds into your garden. It details the species of tree and shrub to plant for perches, shelter, nest sites, and berries, and even how to set about it. Bird tables and other food dispensers come in for a *Which-type* analysis, and there are sections on the foods to offer, bird numbers, water for bathing and drinking, nestboxes, and ringing.

This is all good, practical stuff: the text draws on experience gained by hundreds of amateur birdwatchers taking part in the Trust's 10-year garden bird survey. There are 200 large pages, hard bound, plenty of

black and white photos and drawings, and a cluster of colour photos. The next two books belong to Usborne's "Pocket of Naturalist" series. *Watching Birds* comes from a most enthusiastic bird watcher. Like Gareth Thomas, Ian Wallace begins at the beginning, with identification and fieldcraft.

He offers some topics for study, such as feeding and flight behaviour, or counting the birds at a roost, but the emphasis here is on seeing a wide variety of birds: the book is something of a "twitcher's" autobiography. ("Twitching" is bird watcher's jargon for putting ticks against the names of species you have seen, and hence for whizzing about the country spotting rarities.)

Starlets

The Way of the Stars. By Ghislaine Vautier. Adapted by Kenneth McLeish. Illustrated by Jacqueline Bezençon. Cambridge University Press. £5.25, 0 521 25061 7.

The authors have scraped the celestial barrel to provide a second collection of Greek legends explaining the origin of "best-known" constellations. This book includes only 7 stories and seems noticeably padded out with double pages of decorative illustration and accompanying diagrams of about 85 constellations most of which, naturally, do not figure in the stories. The diagrams are sometimes placed so densely on the page that they collide and serve to increase the effect of confusion. It seems unnecessary to include such abstract signs as "The Chisel" or "The Pump" and any child comparing the picture with the diagram would understandably wonder how the constellation could possibly have the name it does.

This sequel to *The Shining Stars* lacks the unifying theme of the Zodiac and the seven stories have nothing in common except that the creation of a constellation is used as a dénouement to each. The stories are forced into a mould which the purpose of the book imposes. Consequently, the traditional centre of interest and natural climax of the original legend is suppressed and details which are intrinsically exciting are omitted or treated superficially. The story of Ariadne is included to explain "The Northern Crown". The focus falls on her abandonment on Naxos and marriage to Dionysos while her adventures with Theseus and the Minotaur are mentioned in a brief résumé.

Pam Michell

How now

Animal Behaviour. By C J Barnard. Croom Helm £17.95, 0 7099 0636 6. £8.95, 0 7099 0673 0.

In a study so young as animal behaviour much of the early work was inevitably concerned with what an animal did and why. Dr Barnard's book looks into the question of how, and probes into the "rapidly growing research literature".

"Behaviour is the tool with which an animal uses its environment." This, the author's opening sentence, is an excellent definition, and the way in which an animal reacts to the environment by means of the nervous system and the endocrine glands is well set out early in the book. The whole text is enriched with references which provide sufficient information to furnish the reader with a good idea of the work which has been done. With some 344 references in the bibliography and based as it is on a university three-year course designed to cover all aspects of behaviour study, the book will be invaluable to student ethologists. Certainly a biological library would be incomplete without a copy.

R C Vernon

Sea sharp

Marine Biology. By James W Nybakken. Harper and Row £18.95, 0 06 04849 0.

In this valuable book, based on courses for undergraduate students given at a marine laboratory on the west coast of the United States, Professor Nybakken, by employing the ecological and avoiding a regional and purely taxonomic approach, has ensured that it will be useful in all parts of the world. Any biologist, whatever his particular interest, will provide himself with a guide to the fauna and flora of the area in which he is working. The illustrations are first class and there are ample references at the end of every chapter. More important, it is at once authoritative and delightfully easy reading.

RCV

Parallel Spelling Tests

Dennis Young

The Parallel Spelling Tests provide for systematic charting of the progress of children at all levels of ability over a period of six vital years. From the banks of sentences in which the items are presented, twelve matched tests without overlap (and a much larger number with partial overlap) can be formed. The tables of quotient norms range from 6.5 to 13.0 and the spelling ages from 6 to 15 years.

The booklet also includes a valuable general introduction to children's spelling errors and the assessment of spelling in children's writing, as well as concise but fundamental guidance on the teaching of spelling.

0 340 33243 3 Limp £2.95

Teachers are invited to write for inspection copies, stating school address.

Hodder & Stoughton

Dept E1322, FREEPOST, Dunton Green, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1YY

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL



Edinburgh '82: The American Repertory Theatre (left) in Moliere's *The Forced Marriage*; La Piccola Scala's production of *La Pietra del Paragone*, by Rossini.

Simon Berry previews the 37th Edinburgh Festival and its ever-expanding Fringe

The road from Vienna

The theme of this year's Edinburgh International Festival is Vienna at the beginning of the century. An exhibition organized by the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland at its new gallery in York Place forms a visual focus for the various influences that shaped the modern movement in art, architecture, interior design and music. As well as showing work by artists like Klimt, Schiele and Kokoschka, *Vienna 1900* successfully recreates the "feel" of the final decade of the Habsburg empire, blown-up photographs showing the trappings of an imperial capital and also the daily life of the urban poor.

The graphic arts are well represented by bold poster designs and architectural drawings from modernist architects like Otto Wagner and Adolf Loos, who pioneered the use of new materials, often in the teeth of strong opposition from the conservative middle class, for department stores and municipal buildings in the centre of the city. The early Secessionists were concerned to break down traditional barriers separating art forms, and there are examples of furniture, tableware and jewelry in this exhibition, which runs for a further two weeks after the official end of the Festival on September 10.

At the eighth Secessionist exhibition, in 1900, one of the main attractions was the "Scottish Room", designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, using items that he and his Glasgow colleagues had designed for Miss Cranston's Ingram Street tea rooms. The Fine Art Society has had the inspired idea of trying to reconstruct how the room must have looked at the Great King Street gallery, not far away from the National Museum.



One of the posters on display at "Vienna 1900".

With its pastel colours, spindly furniture and inlaid panels and paintings the end result is haunting.

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"DON'T MISS MY MASTER CLASS!"



The Festival's reputation has always relied on its musical offerings - concerts, opera and ballet - and sometimes the choice of items and performers has erred on the side of safety. This year, however, there is some excitement at the decision to give the lion's share to a forgotten composer, Alexander von Zemlinsky, friend of the Serialists like Webern and Schoenberg but showing more affinity to late romanticists like Mahler and Hindemith. Two of his seven operas are being staged by the Hamburg State Opera in the first week, which is also doing a most untraditional production of *The Magic Flute*.

More opera comes from the St Louis Opera Theatre and its offerings are equally unusual - *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, a first opera by Stephen Paulus, and Delius's *Fennimore and Gerda*. Ballet-lovers will have to choose between the experimental Ballet Rambert and the Hungarian State Ballet's rock ballet *Proba*.

Noticeable in the official Festival this year is the increased prominence given to drama, a trend which will probably be more apparent when Frank Dunlop, the new director, takes over. Glasgow's Citizens Theatre, its international reputation assured by recent foreign tours, has taken over the Assembly Hall for the three weeks to stage a First World War epic, *The Last Days of Mankind* by Karl Kraus, and Hofmannsthal's original stage version of *(Der) Rosenkavalier*.

Also not to be ignored during the first week is a controversial picture of the anti-Semitic, woman-hating philosopher Otto Weininger, *The Soul of a Jew*, given by Haifa Municipal Theatre in Hebrew (with simultaneous translation). Sounds just the kind of show you'd once have expected to find on the Fringe.

Nowadays it is almost impossible to know what sort of event to expect there. Pneumatic art and sculpture performance feature this year to add to the other genres represented during its four hectic weeks (August 14 to September 10). This year there are about 450 performing groups and 28 exhibitions, with ticket prices ranging from £1 to £3, occupying 125 venues throughout Edinburgh. Informed opinion has it that this year at least half a million tickets will be sold.

The Fringe programme now looks like a telephone directory, but look out for the following.

First week (starts August 21)

Basic Space Dance Theatre, based in Edinburgh, has a new show on at Belford Church Theatre, with 11 other contemporary dance groups, under the umbrella title Dance Direction. Borderline is doing a West of Scotland revue entitled *Lassie Phone Home*. Russell Hunter likewise, but his latest collaboration with scriptwriter W Gordon Smith (*What A Way To Go*) requires him to address the audience from inside a coffin. Check by Jowl Theatre Company deserve a mention for attempting to put *Vanity Fair* on stage in only two and a half hours at lunchtime (will they include excerpts from Waterloo too?). In the open air behind the Fringe Office, Cliff Hanger, with the zany Pookie-snackenburgers, make lighter lunchtime fare. A one-man show about Gerald Manley Hopkins is on for just one week, written and acted by Peter Gale. Scottish theatre is provided by Hilltop Theatre Co, which is doing Alexander Reid's *The Lass With The Muckle Mou*, a surprisingly accessible comedy in dialect. Rob Inglis will be spending every lunchtime for four weeks changing from Dr Jekyll to Mr Hyde and should be worth watching. A Hill O' Beans Theatre Company appears at the big tent on Castle Terrace (run by Circuit Productions) with their version of *Casablanca* for one week only. A welcome repeat from last year, when he won a Fringe First, of Jack Klaff's *Cuddles*, which unveils a few layers of skin looking at boy-meets-girl. Edinburgh's Theatre Workshop mounts a new production of Dario Fo's *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* at the Little Lyceum theatre. The Medieval Players move nearer modern times with their version of *Gargantua*, after Sir Thomas Urquhart's version of Rabelais, for one week only. The National Student Theatre Company has a new play uncompromisingly called *Bottle* about young people surviving the 1980s. The Royal Holloway College is staging *Buried Child* by Sam Shepherd for one week only at lunchtime. The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama is following, *Lark Rise*, last year's stunning success, with *Candleford*, another promenade production adapted from Flora Thompson's reminiscences of rural Oxfordshire.

Second week (August 28)
The opening of *The Island* by Athol

Fugard, about prisoners on Robben Island, performed by two actors from the Sundown Theatre in Zimbabwe. Writers Theatre Company is staging a new play by Heathcote Williams, *At It*, which looks at our obsession with royalty. Strathelyde Theatre Group has a stage version of Fritz Lang's *M* told through masks, mime and music. The Actors Theatre Company (ATC) is doing its own adaptation of Molier's *Don Juan* at Castle Terrace for one week.

Third week (September 4)

David McNiven has a new late-night all-music show described as "rock and roll with a contemporary social comment" at the Pleasance. In addition to all this there is a two-week Book Festival in Charlotte Square Gardens, a Jazz Festival (one week from August 28) and a Fest of British Youth Orchestras (weeks one and two).

7:84

7:84 Scotland premiere
THEIR FIRST
GENERAL GATHERING
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"WOMEN IN POWER"
or "Up the Acropolis!"

An adaptation of two Aristophanes' comedies by John McGrath with music by the modern Greek composer Thanos Mikroutikos.

Multi-Hall, Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, 29 Aug-3 Sept 7.30pm Fringe.

Official Festival, 5-10 Sept 7.30pm Fringe.

The National Association of Youth Orchestras presents a FESTIVAL OF BRITISH YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

22 August-3 September

12.30pm & 7.30pm

CENTRAL HALL, TOLL CROSS, EDINBURGH

Tickets: Lunchtime £1 (50p)

Evening £2 (£1)

from Fringe Box Office or at door

Full details in Fringe programme (pages 41-42).

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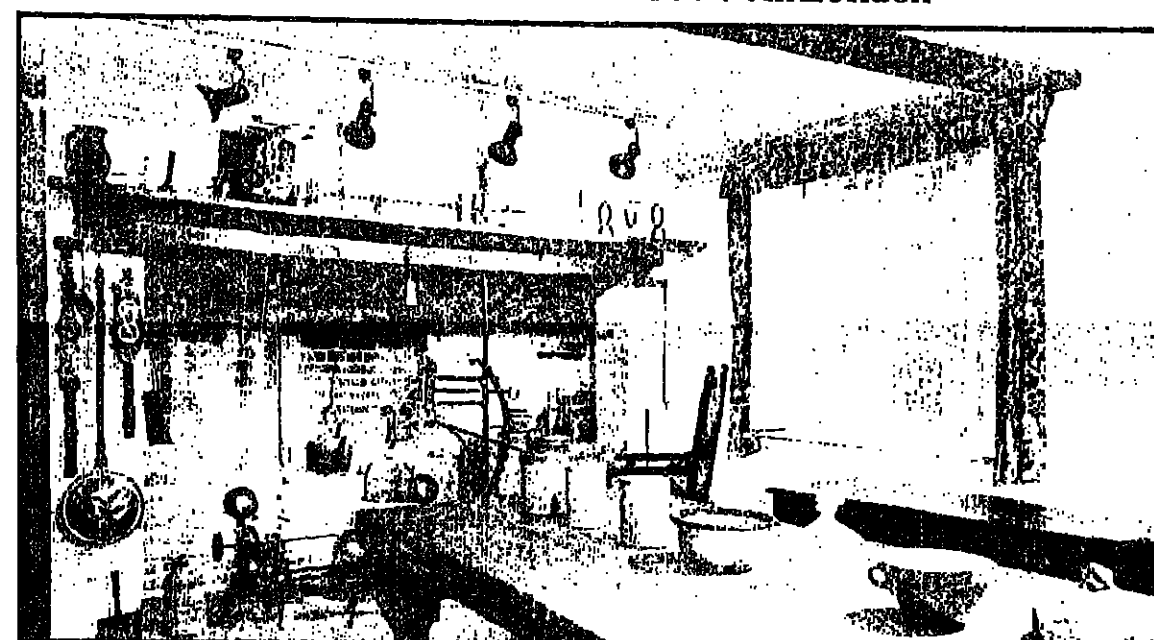
Sunday 2pm-5pm

ADMISSION FREE

RESOURCES

Farmhouse history

Liz Heron visits a rural museum . . . in London



special exhibitions in the upstairs rooms - 10 a year. For each he produces a specially written booklet with background information.

On the day I visited, there had been three school groups - attracted by the current exhibition "Getting There by Road, Rail and Air in Britain", which explored local transport history through photographs and postcards, models and route maps.

Not all of the exhibitions have such a clear local emphasis, but there's usually some kind of local link. Last year's exhibition on Victorian ceramic tiles was a general survey of how tile-making developed into a mass industry in the last century, and as well as displaying designs by Kate Greenaway and others, it drew on examples of local manufacture and its history. Another exhibition highlighted the career of a local cinema manager who had been a doyen of early cinema-promotion, and looked at the history of London's picture palaces, and the early days of the film industry.

The local history and archaeology societies have a longstanding relationship with the museum and have taken responsibility for organizing a number of exhibitions. The effluence of interest in local and social history in recent years has also led to greater local involvement in the museum.

Church Farm House is maintained by Barnet Libraries Department. It draws between 12,000 and 14,000 visitors a year. By preserving a unique historic building and blending its attractions with constantly renewed forays into the everyday life of the past, it brings history alive with admirable immediacy.

house and the area, and the curator, Gerard Roots, will help with explanations. He will also accompany visitors to the attic, so that they can look closely at the thatching under the tiled roof and see the original box gutters that run from one side of the house to the other. Apart from the caretaker, Gerard Roots runs the museum single-handed. This involves organizing the

how recently this part of London was still countryside - a change that has taken place in living memory.

The downstairs rooms are furnished in period style. There's a spacious drawing room, a dining room with splendid oak panelling, and next to it the kitchen which, particularly for younger visitors, holds the special fascination of unfamiliar objects large and small.

Many of these items pre-date the advent of mass production in the mid-nineteenth century. The old flagstone floor and original vast open fireplace are filled with sundry articles that were used for household tasks and cooking before the cooking range came into production. Pots hang on a chimney crane over the fire; there's a griddle, a spit, and a weighted jack to turn the spit; there are sad irons and slug irons, fire-dogs and tongs (all their uses clearly explained in one of the museum's free leaflets). There are Bellarmine jars and plate warmers, a linen press and a meat press, sugar cutters and toasting forks, and a late eighteenth-century bread-toasting gadget. The oldest item is a sixteenth-century decorated oak chest, beautifully polished like all the furniture and the burnished wood floors throughout the house. Everything is extremely well cared for, yet the atmosphere is unlike that of a museum since nothing is roped off or labelled. All the necessary information is available in leaflet form. There's a teaching kit on the history of the



Commonwealth conversation

by Prabhu S Gupta

Chinua Achebe: In conversation with Yolande Cantu
Edward Khamu Brathwaite: In conversation with C L Innes
British Council Literature Recordings, £6 each plus VAT. From The British Council, Publications Department, 65 Davies St., London W1Y 2AA.

Many of the materials produced or distributed by the British Council should be useful for certain groups of students in Britain, but it is difficult to find out about them. Indeed, some council materials are exclusively for distribution overseas.

There has also been for some years now, an emphasis on the teaching of the English language, while a curious isolationist policy has been followed regarding the

literature resulting from the now worldwide use of English.

Unannounced, the council has finally begun to recognize literature in English from the Commonwealth, as well as its own responsibility towards promoting it. The best means of supporting English language teaching is surely through ensuring that the product resulting from the use of English in other countries is paid due attention. This is quite apart from the fact that some of the finest and most imaginative contributions to literature in English have come from outside Britain - for a hundred years or more from Ireland and America; and for several decades from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

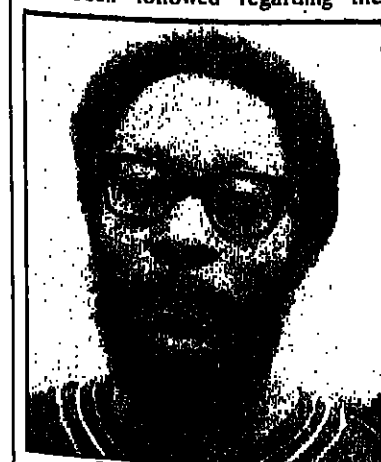
The international links and ramifications of literature in English have now begun to be explored by the council in a series of Nexus booklets and audio-cassettes. These are the first cassettes to have been released in the council's Commonwealth Writers series.

Any "conversation" between a critic and a novelist which is intended to be heard by a younger reader, will of necessity be largely in the form of questions and answers. In the case of these cassettes this format works - though in quite different ways. Achebe's fiction is both accessible and widely read, and his warmly relaxed and easy manner draws us to his work, while the more refined pleasure of Brathwaite's poetry is elucidated in a

more abstract, demanding interview. Both interviews cover a wide range of questions, from the more or less banal to such fascinating fields as the interaction between oral tradition and broadcasting, the process of composition and the influences upon it, the question of social conditions, the strategy and structure of individual works, and the overall purpose and philosophy of the writer.

Now that Commonwealth writers have begun to be studied in British schools, such cassettes will be as useful here as abroad.

As for their role in sales of British Council materials abroad, they should help to project a properly balanced view of multi-cultural Britain, instead of a "white" Britain which has generally been projected by the council.



Edward Brathwaite



Chinua Achebe

Concerned technology

From September 1983 and for most of 1984 a series of exhibitions will demonstrate microprocessor-controlled aids for people with special needs.

Called "Concerned Technology (Information Technology for those with Special Needs)", the exhibitions will tour 29 towns and cities round the country, introducing disabled people and those involved with their welfare to the many new aids which are available.

At each venue 30 or 40 products will be displayed and changed periodically in order to show as many different aids as possible. Equipment in the exhibi-

tions will be large and small, expensive and cheaper. Among them will be teaching aids, units which can be programmed for use with a computer, and sight and speech aids.

The exhibitions will allow the participation of disabled people as exhibitors and visitors. A group of disabled people at each venue will be selected for training to demonstrate some of the aids, and displays will permit visitors to try out any piece of equipment which interests them.

For further information contact Nancy Shawcross on 01-789 4055.

Arabic computer

Ramez M Alhalaby, President of Autotam Computers headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, has developed the answer for Arab Sinclair ZX-81 home computer enthusiasts. Now, the ZX-81 home computers can be programmed in Arabic. Prior to this, all Arab home computer users had to program using English words.

Other computers with similar features are only available in large business computers, far too expensive for the average person. This new addition to ZX-81 is expected to increase sales. "There are many Arab people who have been waiting for a long time for a full Arabic computer - now we have it," said Alhalaby.

Opportunities in computers

A summer computer course for children at Middlesex Polytechnic desperately needs extra volunteer instructors. Plans were to take 24 children on the course, but as it turns out, 120 aged 9 to 11 want to come along. People who can help throughout the week of August 22 to 26 would be ideal, and anyone with experience of using the BBC Microcomputer would be most welcome. Anyone interested should contact Michael McNamara on 01-368 9583.

A unique opportunity for a computer enthusiast has arisen at Inter-Action's Community Education Resource Centre based in Kentish Town in north London.

Anyone interested in using their skills and knowledge to benefit others by doing part-time research and advising on the social and educational applications of computers should contact Ed Bernan at Inter-Action Trust, 15 Wilkin Street, London NW5 3JG. Telephone 01-267 9421.

RESOURCES

Musical loopholes

Chris Holmes of Kings College, Taunton, has been working with three groups of fifth formers in a project which aims to involve the non-musician in creating music of a high standard. Here he describes their work.

In a recent Schools Council survey, music was seen by pupils to be the most boring and most useless subject area of the school curriculum. This finding represents a problem for music teachers, although it is probably not news to them. Attempts to relieve the problem of the "sit-down-and-listen-to-this" approach, are usually centred on two areas: the introduction of creative music, in an idiom usually modern and avant-garde, and the recreated performance of pop songs with a chorus of singers and a few instrumentalists.

Each area, though, has its limitations, and usually ends up with that unmistakable ring of "school music". The avant-garde begins to sound like mere squeaks and bangs in a classroom, and the pop song can never approach the quality and impact of the original.

Then school textbooks started running courses on electronic music - tape loops and simple multi-tracking - and here at last lay the first glimmers of a solution to the basic problem: how to capitalize on the creative potential of students without exposing their lack of a formal training. By extending these techniques, and with perhaps slightly more ambitious aims, the results can be quite staggering.

Most spectacular perhaps are the possibilities in producing home versions of rock songs. Here the choice of track is important: certain repetitive

elements are helpful, for instance, since tape loops are obviously going to play a crucial role; you only have to play it right once to occupy a large part of the final product. Instrumental numbers too have a considerable advantage, since vocals are a major problem for 15 to 16-year-olds.

A drum track has to be compiled first, preferably in a loop which can be embellished later. The group will decide which sounds you hear on which beats - what more conventional music education than that? - seven or eight different sounds perhaps in a bar of four beats. They then find these sounds not on the school drum kit, which will always sound like the school drum kit, but in individual solo "hits" on commercial records, and these are then recorded in sequence

on to your reel-to-reel tape. A tempo is chosen, and this is translated into quantities of tape, so many centimetres per beat. This means the drum loop can be edited into an immaculate rhythm and dubbed on to the master tape. Rolls and breaks can be added by copying from a record one single solo beat, say eight times, editing the beats very closely together and splicing a copy of the end result into the master.

The quality of the drum track - both the recording and performing - should be most impressive, since you are using a compilation of only second generation copies of material on record. You then multi-track on top of that whatever else is required, either by using sound-on-sound technique (with say a second-hand Revox A77)

or by finding a simple multi-track machine such as the Teac A3440.

If the piece was carefully chosen, you should be able to make further use of tape loops, again with an infinite number of opportunities to perfect a section. With careful editing, the final product should be really rather respectable, coming as it does from students of little formal ability.

These same progresses can also of course be applied to the second area of work, that of original avant-garde writing, evolving into a kind of "montage" technique of composition. The group with the teacher plans a work, or a section of a work, for several weeks maybe, and then uses as its sound sources not rattles and bangs in the classroom, but tiny sections of

pre-recorded material which can then be treated - played backwards, with echo, or at different speeds. Loops can be multi-tracked together, elements of chance introduced, but the resulting sound will be so much more impressive than the conventional classroom avant-garde.

It is the combination of this highly professional sound and the concept of the group working closely with the teacher that is so exciting - an extension perhaps of Malcolm Bradbury's recent work with his students on *Notes of Exchange*. It is a partnership that works on a genuinely creative level: music is now composed by committee, with the final material being arrived at by the agreed adoption and rejection of ideas.

Points have to be argued until some kind of agreement is reached; the students will reject some of the teacher's ideas, and vice versa - an instant critical process is in action. A genuine spiral of inspiration can be reached by feeding ideas off each other, in a sharing of each stage of a work's conception.

There are good days and bad; sometimes work has to be abandoned, and a session evolves into conversation or background research. But at least they're involved, they're participating in the whole long process of creating, with all the tensions and satisfaction that implies. And it does stop them getting bored.

MEDIA

Window on crime

Hugh David on crime-prevention films for the young



Crime and Its Consequences
Three new Home Office crime-prevention films available in 16mm film or a variety of video formats, for purchase or on free loan, from the Central Film Library, Chalfont Grove, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 8TN. Telephone 02407 4111.

Prevention, it is said, is better than cure, and preventing teenagers from becoming involved in crime is seen by the police as an important part of their job. *Crime and Its Consequences*, a new series of Home Office crime-prevention films, has been designed to do exactly that.

The three 10-minute films focus on vandalism, shoplifting and burglary; the three offences in which teenagers are most likely to become involved, according to the latest statistics.

Launching the films, Minister of State at the Home Office, the Rt Hon. Douglas Hurd, MP, accepted that petty crime can be a passing phase for many teenagers. Nevertheless, in 1981 54 per cent of all those found guilty of or cautioned for, indictable offences were under the age of 21. One third were under 17. The minister hoped that the new films would play a part in deterring many 14 to 16-year-olds from taking what could easily become "the first step on the road to a life of crime".

"It simply does not pay to fall in with bad company and become involved in crime, no matter how harmless it may seem at the time, no matter how tempting the first step," he said.

That is the message of the films. They are specifically aimed at secondary school children who have hitherto had no involvement with the police but who are or might be at risk of being led astray by friends or classmates.

In each film an "innocent" is persuaded against his or her better judgment to do something which promises to be exciting or rewarding, and appears to have very little risk

attached, but which ultimately proves to carry a painful and lasting sting.

In *Too Late for Tears* a schoolgirl called Anne is lured by another girl's boyfriend into accompanying them on a shoplifting expedition. In *Asking for It* young Klipper is in-

volged into helping his brother and a mate break into an empty house; there'll be money he can have to buy those new football boots they promise. The third, *Who's Sorry Now?*, concentrates on three young lads whose "knacking about" in a builders' hut has led to a fire in

which an elderly woman is badly hurt.

In each film the link between cause and effect, committing a crime and getting caught, is simple and direct. The boys in *Asking for It* are picked up by the police even before they have left the house, thanks to

the vigilance of a neighbour. Two of the vandals in *Who's Sorry Now?* are taken to a hospital to see the woman who has suffered for their stupidity. Again and again the simple message is thumped home, that if you commit a crime you will get caught and have to take the consequences.

Interestingly, however, these consequences are not the sentences the offenders will receive. Although attendance centres and juvenile burcauts are mentioned, the film stress the pain and shame of being branded a criminal.

The minister admitted that that might not deter the young Charles Peaches and Bill Sykeses of this world, but research had shown it was uppermost in the minds of the films' target audience. Consequently, all three have scenes in the interview rooms of police stations. There are tears and decent, distraught parents saying "Oh, Anne", while uniformed sergeants look stern and say "Now come along".

The intention is not to scare off the would-be offenders but to make them aware of what they would be doing. The police are depicted constructively, not as vindictive killjoys but as solid and sympathetic representatives of society. Sergeant Dixon and Bert Lynch from *Carry On* but out of shot. On screen their counterparts (played by actors) would all too willingly give you the time, although there is the implication that they would just as happily give someone like young Klipper a clip round the ear.

Well made - although the dialogue in the burglary film is rather stilted - the films are intended as "triggers" to discussion with either visiting crime-prevention or schools liaison officers or the classroom teacher. Their open-ended form is designed to elicit questions about police and court procedures, appropriate sentences and, most importantly, all how best to say no when temptation presents itself.

concluding comment of a headmaster who observed that while schools could do a great deal for some children, the price of failure was high: "Youngsters can, particularly in the fourth and fifth years, find school to be a place of total failure. This leads almost inevitably to problems of discipline, self esteem, non-acceptance of the school and all the associated difficulties that go with this sort of syndrome."

It is probably inevitable that some children will always travel this way. The significance of this package and the attitude which goes with it should be that there will be fewer of them in future.

Owen Surridge

Integration in practice

of this teacher training package by the inspectorate. The documentary introduces the problem of identifying children with special needs (not always obvious) and shows primary and secondary teachers coming to terms with the new dimension to their work.

The supporting audio-visual training modules show what to look for and how to go about dealing with problems of deafness, defective

sight, physical handicaps, speech disorders and slow learning. Assessment procedures are explained in the accompanying booklet, which also gives sources of further specialized information. The package is intended for use in training courses under specialist advisers.

Throughout, the approach is practical and unsentimental. The documentary shows teachers and children struggling for comprehen-

sion and the heightened awareness teachers derive from this has its own rewards for other children. If the estimation that as many as 20 per cent of children need special help in the classroom is anything like accurate, that increased awareness must be very important - and not only for the youngsters directly affected.

Any tendency to starchy-eyed idealism about just what can be achieved was firmly and rightly quashed by the

Praiseworthy

English Congregational Hymns in the Eighteenth Century. By Madeleine F Marshall and Janet Todd. University of Kentucky Press \$15.50. Prayers for the New Babel. By Ian Robinson. Brynmill Press £6.50.

In the religion of English people there is a four-fold canon: the work of Christian poets, from Langland to Eliot, the Authorised Version, the Prayer Book and a core of classic hymnody. As for the poets, their work can only gradually be excised from consciousness, and not even the Vicar of Ealing has yet rewritten the "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity". But the rest of the canon is being undermined, especially by clerical agents of destruction. The result is a widening gulf between articulate Christians and some of those who man the ecclesiastical apparatus and present themselves to the public as the "voice of the Church". Lay Christians are confronted by fatuities of thought and expression which force them to do their own theology and also to work out the relation between human creativity and Christian devotion.

The new study of eighteenth century hymns by Madeleine Marshall and Janet Todd is not intended as a defence of classic hymnody. But it belongs to that new assessment by scholars like Donald Davie which honours the English hymn with rigorous critical attention. Of course, there are as many bottomless pits in hymnody as there are in poetry, and some essays in grotesquerie which are hard to beat anywhere, as for example the Moravian hymn translated

Lovely Side-hole, dearest Side-hole,
Sweetest Side-hole made for me.

Part of the problem is that hymns are very often mosaics of biblical quotation, and these are not always fitted into coherent patterns. It is perfectly scriptural to speak of God's breath to see the worm in man, to mount on wings, and to have Pisgah gleams of the Promised Land. But when God breathes on a worm so that it sprouts wings to ascend Mount Pisgah, the effect is bizarre.

This study is really about an appropriate Christian rhetoric. The traditional view favours the plain rather than the fancy, the common rather than the personal. A hymn should be powerful but not forced, strong in exemplary faith without doing violence to human emotions, consistent in imagery. Copper, for example, could be too lyrical, delicate or personal for the constraints imposed by hymn writing. Wesley could violate our natural emotions, as for example in his

Ah! lovely, Appearance of Death!
No Slight upon Earth is so fair:

Not all the gay Pageants that breathe,
Can with a dead Body compare.

Even in his great hymn "Jesus, lover of my soul" the images build up by ad hoc accumulation, tumbling one after another, rather than forming a consistent pattern. Watts, by comparison, keeps tighter control. Where Wesley provides a participatory theatre, shifting tenses, metres, and objects of address, Watts sets out tableaux for Christian contemplation. Of course, as the authors point out, Watts could rely on a sober, instructed congregation whereas Wesley had positively, even violently to direct and school the emotions of multitudes.

John Newton, whose early life both as slave and as slave dealer gave him unique experiences to draw upon, is less well known. His worst hymns, mainly sermonettes, are very bad; his best are superlative. "Amazing Grace", "How sweet

the name of Jesus sounds" and "Glorious things of thee are spoken" combine a restrained power with consistency. Newton managed to give his Buckinghamshire parish of Olney a place in the Providential orderings of the world, taking in local events like the town fire and the American War. The Devil walked abroad in Olney challenging divine Providence, for the souls of a little Zion set in a British Israel.

Cowper was a "fearful saint" whose personal sensibility hovered between his uncertain election to the Kingdom and a lyrical response to nature. At one moment he would conjure up a God like Vulcan who worked "Deep in unfathomable mines". At another he could create a vision of Nature close to the genius of Colins out of which he drew emblems of salvation.

Evening with a silent pace,
Slowly moving in the west,
Shows an emblem of his grace
Points to an eternal rest.

I think the two authors are right to criticize those who see in the evangelical appeal to feelings and to simplicity a presage of romanticism. The influences were, they argue, part of the curious counterpoint of the eighteenth century, on the one hand Augustan, on the other offering an exemplary direction of the feelings and an infusion of Protestant Baroque, much of it from foreign sources.

Ian Robinson's brilliant tract on the Prayer Book provides an analysis as to precisely how and why the new liturgies are literally dispirited and God-forsaken. Liturgical theories are designed to make services structured and whole, but the practice reflects a bureaucratically managed chaos. Those who concoct liturgy are masters of the ad hoc, sticking together elements which ought to fuse, ignorantly supposing form and content separable, and beauty a mere adventitious extra.

Robinson's target is simultaneously the mode of expression and the theology expressed. He adds that the A.S.B. is no "people's book" as the Archbishop of York has claimed, but a lifeless mock-up lost in linguistic no-man's land. It is an object lesson in how to be drab without being plain.

Certain emphases are particularly valuable in this sharp and provocative book. Ian Robinson provides an account of the coherence and economy of Cranmer's Communion Service, defending Cranmer against the baneful animadversions of Gregory Dix. He goes on to argue that not everything can be encompassed in the Communion, and that the Parish Communion movement may well be ephemeral. His account of the occasional offices shows up the etiology and confusion of the theology of Christian initiation, the dilution of the stark direct drama of the burial service, and the sloppy mixture of a Hollywood script and social worker's chat, incorporated in the marriage service.

Above all, Robinson brings out the absurdity of a Church which is tolerant of almost all except those who believe it has always been on the right lines. In his view, the Church of England needs to find its own integrity, to be in England, living in love and charity with its Roman and Free Church neighbours, but eschewing unprincipled ecumenism. Unfortunately, as he points out, the case against what has gone on is never answered, and the critics win by default. These are only two responses which he may expect. One is the unctuous drawing up of clerical skirts at such plain speaking and sharp thinking, combined with what he calls "episcopal waggishness". The other is a self-hatred both of England and of the Church of England, whereby the sometime guardians repudiate precisely what they are appointed to cherish and defend.

David Martin

ENDPAGE



We are all familiar with the keen amateur photographer who, despite a wealth of expensive equipment and great attention to shutter speeds and apertures still manages to produce poor results. For some this is unimportant. The equipment, zoom lenses and motor drives are what they love about photography, not the resultant images. Begin With Bailey (Dew £10.95) is aimed at the amateur photographer who wants to take better pictures. It takes the form of a series of full page David Bailey photographs, each accompanied by an explanatory text by George Hughes which discusses each picture in detail and highlights any relevant lessons to be learnt from it. Topics covered range from the "artistic" - composition, lighting, movement - to the technical, with the obligatory section on the nude. The style is sometimes a little awkward, but this is compensated for by the content, which is generally constructive and illuminating. The book is not for those who want to learn more about colour photography, (with the exception of the cover all photos are black and white), but with Bailey's pictures set as the standard to aim for, even amateurs should benefit from it, even the equipment fetishists. Left, a portrait of Marie Helvin, Bailey's wife.

Michael Spillard

Alternative vision

The Naked Artist. By Peter Fuller. Writers and Readers £4.95.

Peter Fuller began writing on art in 1968 and came to the fore in the early seventies with a group of left-wing critics. He has continued to write lengthy, regular articles for *Art Monthly* and *New Society*, as well as making occasional appearances in the *New Left Review*, *Aspects* and *Crafts*. Though still a Marxist, his views on art have changed dramatically in recent years and he now writes, if not conservative, then conservationist art criticism. In particular he is anxious to uphold the traditional media of painting, drawing and sculpture which in the early seventies seemed reactionary and irrelevant to the continuing saga of modernism.

Around 1977 Fuller detected in late modernism an element of "genosis" - a self-emptying vacuity. His diagnosis was both timely and apposite, and it helped usher in a period of confused, if healthier, post-modernism. Since then his writing has become more prescriptive

than descriptive; emphatically certain of the cause of ill health. In art and art education today, he is equally confident of his ability to point to its cure. And because few critics write with Fuller's dedication and sense of direction, his arguments demand attention.

Fuller is now critical of left-wing criticism which sees art activity as constituted wholly within ideology. For him, as for Marcuse, it is the aesthetic or subjective aspects of art that create an antagonistic force in capitalist society and which offer that "other reality". In Marcuse's words, "a cosmos of hope". The value of painting, drawing and sculpture for Fuller lies in their expressiveness, and in their capacity to provide an alternative vision of experience and the world to that generated by advertisements, colour supplements and other mechanically reproduced and therefore "anaesthetic" media. Emphasis is also laid on the need to recognize and get back to the biological roots of culture.

Fuller calls himself an extremist yet many of his latest opinions only

bring him back to either a familiar or fashionable position. Vernon Lee's and Bernard Berenson's behaviourist theories drew attention to the biological roots of art in the 1890s. Fuller calls for drawing to be reinstated at the centre of adult education in fine art, but art students themselves demanded a return to life-drawing in the late seventies. And mechanical reproduction does not necessarily produce "fundamentally anaesthetic" art: as William Morris realized, it is the control of the machine, not the machine itself, that destroys "joy in labour". In addition, Fuller's conclusions are disappointing because he so often overstates his case or makes a generalization out of a specific. But compared with *The Art Presence*, recently published essays by a prominent New York art critic, Sanford Schwartz, Fuller's book has a far broader range of reference and seems much more on target. However much one disagrees with him, Fuller still has the knack of stirring complacency and arousing vital debate.

Frances Spalding

Bubbling up

Return to the Forbidden Planet. By Joe Darlison. Hell Can Be Heaven. By Hereward K. Bubble Theatre Company.

Anyone living near one of London's larger parks or commons will know all about the Bubble Theatre. Taking the dog out for a walk; coming home from work, they can hardly miss the lorries, the generator, the jeeps and the trailers parked around the tented encampment in which the touring fringe company perform. This year there seem to be more than ever, hardly surprising, perhaps, in view of the increasing technical sophistication of the troupe. Now their tent-theatre is equipped with video and their five new shows all feature pounding electric rock music.

It provides a background to *The Rogue's Progress*, adapted from Fielding's novel *Jonathan Wild*, and is well to the fore in the company's

other full-length show *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. Billed as "Shakespeare's forgotten rock'n'roll masterpiece", Joe Darlison's play achieves the impossible by successfully fusing the plot of *The Tempest* with the conventions of the 1950s sci-fi B-movie - and then serving up the whole outrageous concoction with lashings of "fifties" and "sixties" music.

Magnus Pike, no less, has videotaped the prologue and epilogue. A dozen Shakespearean texts are pillaged for lines, and author and company obviously revel in the memory of younger days doubly misapprehended by the juke-box and the cinema. No need to go any more deeply into their manic plot than to mention that Prospero is a mad scientist living in exile on the planet Dilluvia (which lies in an outer galaxy somewhere between delirium and Nylria) and that despite the attentions of a Starship cook, Miranda eventually falls for the pipe-smokin' bass-playin' Captain

Tempest. Much the same anarchic humour pervades Bubble's late-night show *Hell Can Be Heaven*, except that there it's not the Complete Works but the songs of Elvis Presley which are quarried for lines. The play (with an effective and appropriate pastiche score) follows the singer's number one fan down to the underworld, where he believes The King will help him answer the questions in a *New Musical Express* competition.

The hard-working company's season also includes *Under the Hills and Far Away*, a children's show for four to seven-year-olds, and *Pick Yourself Up*, a free adaptation of Molière's *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*, in which thirties' swing replaces the fifties' rock.

Hugh David

The Bubble Theatre is touring London boroughs until September 4. Further information and bookings on 01-485 3420 or 01-485 8335.

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